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The New Statesman and Nation, April 2nd, 1938.

FOR KING AND PORTUGAL?

THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. XV. No. 371 (New Series) **SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 1938** [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] **SIXPENCE**

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

FRANCO'S advance on the Aragon front has reached the gates of Lerida. After the debacle of last week-end the situation became critical for the Republic. In the southern sector of the battle the rebels were still being successfully held up in the hilly country between Alcañiz and the sea; but in the centre, where Franco appeared to have concentrated the weight of his German and Italian guns, tanks and aircraft, the Government resistance had broken badly: advancing astride the Saragossa-Barcelona road, Moroccan and Aragonese divisions of the rebel army had forced the line of the River Cinca and crossed the Catalonian frontier. Farther north, Franco's Navarrese corps had struck eastwards from Huesca and reached Barbastro. Despatches from war-correspondents with the Government forces gave the impression of an army defeated, and to some extent demoralised, by its enemies' overwhelming mechanised strength. Stiffened by reinforcements of seasoned troops transferred from the Madrid front the Republicans fought hard for Lerida, whose fall would mean the loss of much of Catalonia's hydro-electric plant; but the insurgent attack continues formidably as we go to press. In Barcelona the Prime Minister, Dr. Negrin, has made impassioned appeals for a stand to the last against the "foreign invasion." How foreign may be judged from the fact that the War Office at Rome announces 1,787 Italian casualties in the March operations.

"None So Blind"

Mr. Chamberlain continues to disclaim possession of any information which would lead him to conclude that Italy has been increasing her intervention in Spain, and the Foreign Secretary similarly informed the House of Lords on Tuesday that he had "never seen any proof" of allegations against Mussolini's good faith in this matter. In the face of overwhelming evidence deriving not merely from the Spanish Government but from every newspaper correspondent—of all shades of political sympathy—in Spain, these denials are an insult to the country's intelligence. Every newspaper reader is fully aware that Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax are deliberately denying inconvenient facts which are perfectly well known to them. As for British foreign policy in general, the Conservative press has been able to claim that the Prime Minister's statement last week had a good reception abroad. So it had. As we forecast, Mr. Chamberlain's carefully balanced blend of "no commitments" with

warnings that "we might not be able to stand aside" has pleased Lord Beaverbrook and the isolationists no less than France and Czechoslovakia. Europe is left guessing; interpretations of the speech in Berlin and Paris alike have been on contradictory lines of wish-fulfilment.

The Labour Manifesto

The manifesto of the National Council of Labour, issued last week-end as a reply to the Prime Minister's speech on foreign policy, reiterated the demand for an immediate lifting of the embargo on the supply of arms to the Spanish Government, and called for a meeting of the League Assembly to consider methods of appeasement in Central Europe and in Spain. Strongly critical as the manifesto was of Mr. Chamberlain's speech and of the Government's policy, it was markedly cautious in its recommendations. It said nothing of withdrawing the British pressure on France to maintain what it rightly called the "farce" of non-intervention; and it contained no threat of action. There is, in effect, only one way in which, under the present circumstances, British Labour can induce the governing class to pay any attention to its protests; and that is by pointing out that it cannot be expected to waive its rights and persuade its members to accept speeding up methods for objects which are not theirs.

Speeding Up Armaments

That is the plain, though unpalatable, truth; and it fully explains Mr. Chamberlain's anxiety to keep the discussions with the Trade Unions and the employers about speeding up armament entirely apart from all considerations of general policy. Unfortunately, as far as the General Council of the Trades Union Congress is concerned, he seems so far to have been successful in this—or surely some suggestion that collaboration must depend on policy would have appeared in the Council of Labour's manifesto. The Prime Minister, however, has still to deal with the Amalgamated Engineering Union, which has not yet met Sir Thomas Inskip; and we note with satisfaction that the A.E.U. Secretary, in a speech on the impending discussions, has drawn attention to the need for political as well as economic safeguards. With the National Confederation of Employers' Organisations Mr. Chamberlain naturally had no trouble. The only "concessions" they are asked for, as far as we are aware, are a readiness to make munitions at high prices and to accept the "dilution" of labour as a gift from the patriotic hands of the Trade Unions. On these terms the employer's willingness to play up is entirely intelligible.

The Czechs at Bay

Dr. Hodza, in a speech that combined conciliation at home with firmness in face of the foreign menace, has announced that the Czech Government is codifying all the existing legislation regarding the national minorities. This, with the new concessions, is to become their constitutional charter of rights. The German attitude, both in Berlin and on the spot, is still one of total rejection. The Germans will have "autonomy" and nothing less, though some of them now mean by that term no longer territorial Home Rule by cantons, but "corporative autonomy"—a plan of racial separation and self-government, resembling the ancient system of the Millets in Turkey. This might not lead so easily to a physical break-up of Czechoslovakia, but it would destroy all hope of co-operation in common work. Meanwhile the *sauve qui peut* among the national parties continues. The Nazi terror is effective. The German Social Democrats, while recalling their Minister from the Cabinet, have adopted an opportunist attitude. They will still in a general way support the Government, but on national questions they stand with their fellow-Germans, though for economic reasons they oppose either cession or territorial autonomy. Henlein's Nazis, who are now the biggest party in the State, are calling loudly for a general election. The Slovaks, or at least the Catholic peasants who follow Father Hlinka, are also demanding autonomy. The Republic, however, is very much stronger than it sounds, for the Czechs are a tough people, well armed, well fortified and capable, especially with the help of Russian aeroplanes, of stubborn resistance.

Nazi Electioneering

In a spate of speeches the Nazi leaders are preparing for the plebiscite over Austria in which the whole Reich is to vote. But the sterner methods of electioneering are not neglected. A vast concentration camp is to be erected near Salzburg; this will be conducted by Austrian Nazis, "as a reward" for their past services: an opportunity to indulge in sadism figures in the Nazi scheme of values as a highly desirable boon. "Suicides" (some of them, doubtless, unassisted) are still numerous in Vienna, and the Jews are subjected to all the insults and cruelties in which the Brown Storm troops exulted in the early months of the German Counter-Revolution. Field-Marshal Göring has declared that the 300,000 Jews of Vienna—a high total, if he means those of unmixed blood—must be driven out: none the less, escape, since the first days of the invasion, has grown difficult. Göring has threatened that Dr. Schuschnigg shall be dealt with by the Courts for the alleged trickery of his plebiscite: it seems, however, more probable that like Thälmann and other formidable foes of the regime, he will be imprisoned indefinitely without trial. The more amiable aspects of the electioneering effort include lavish offers to build roads and railways, to develop electric power, and above all to expand the production of various ores of military value, notably iron and copper. It is boasted that work has already been found for 18,000 unemployed, not all of them as gaolers. Perhaps the most remarkable event of the campaign is the capitulation of the Church. The bishops have published a rescript calling on the faithful to vote for the *Anschluss*, though as yet no agreement exists as to where runs the line that separates God's kingdom from Caesar's. The one relatively happy fact that has to be recorded is that the American Government has called for a concerted international effort to find homes for Austrian refugees.

China Fights Back

From the recent Chinese claims of remarkable victories, qualified as they were by subsequent Japanese counter-attacks, several facts emerge. First, the Chinese still hold the strategic key of the eastern area, the junction town of Suchow, where the Lunghai railway (east to west) crosses the Tientsin-Nanking line. This means that the Japanese can make only local use of the railways

they partly hold, and this seems to be true even of the Peking-Chengchow line. Secondly, though active guerilla operations continue, the Chinese are not reduced to these tactics. They have still in the field two or three regular armies, each of about 100,000 men, which operate, sometimes victoriously, in Shantung, Shansi, Honan and Anhwei. The Japanese are not numerous enough to establish continuous lines over this vast area; their casualties are heavy and the quality of their troops, mainly middle-aged reservists, less than first-rate. Chinese casualties may be even heavier, but their man-power is unlimited. As yet, and for some months to come, they seem to have adequate supplies of munitions. The *Times* correspondent goes so far as to say that Marshal Chiang-Kai-Shek is "serenely confident."

Storm Over Tennessee

Against a background of continued capitalist "ca' canny" and a renewed slump in Wall Street the battle between New Dealers and the Old Guard is still joined in the United States. After long and embittered debates the President has succeeded in getting his Bill to remodel the Executive through the Senate, and the New Dealers are also jubilant at the Supreme Court's ruling that one part, at least, of the Act designed to break up utility holding companies is constitutionally valid. The battle, however, seems likely to be hottest in the Tennessee Valley Authority dispute. A Congressional Inquiry is to probe the circumstances surrounding the President's dismissal of Dr. Arthur Morgan, the late T.V.A. chairman. Dr. Arthur Morgan, whose policy aimed at an entente between T.V.A. and the private power companies, had for some time been at loggerheads with his colleagues, Dr. Lilienthal and Dr. H. A. Morgan—whole-hogging crusaders in the "power for the people" campaign. The dismissed chairman charges his colleagues with condoning "disorder, waste, confusion and lack of planning"; and allegations have been flying around concerning a $5 million claim for damages preferred against the T.V.A. in respect of an inundated quarry owned by Senator Berry, a staunch supporter of the President. Whatever the outcome, the inquiry will furnish an unrivalled opportunity for political mud-slinging.

Road Licences

The demand of a section of the road transport firms for the abolition of the licensing system is entirely unacceptable; there is a very strong case for regulation in the interests of road safety and decent labour conditions, over and above the economic case for preventing excessive duplication of services on already overcrowded roads. But there is some substance in the view that the methods of operating the licensing system ought to be overhauled. It is, for example, on the face of it absurd that a licence-holder who is authorised to carry one kind of goods from X to Y and another class from Y to X should be compelled by law to use different vehicles, and therefore to run his lorries empty for half the time. Nor can it be ignored that the railway companies, by opposing licences on every possible pretext, are doing their best to turn the licensing system into an instrument of monopoly on their own behalf (including that of the road concerns in which they are financially interested). Certainly the licensing system must be retained, and strengthened in relation to the enforcement of safety provisions and good conditions of labour. But the stiffer it is made, the more assured we need to be of its equitable working.

Tax-Dodging Exposed

The Beaverbrook newspapers — *Daily Express* and *Evening Standard*—have joined with the *Times* in exposing the methods by which wealthy recipients of investment income evade taxation. Apart from the cases in which landed proprietors convert their estates into a limited liability company—a course for which some moral justification can be pleaded on the ground that only thus can an estate be kept intact—tax evasion takes a multiplicity of forms, all embracing one essential principle: spendable income must be disguised as capital (and therefore non-taxable) receipts. To secure this disguise, in face of the efforts of successive Finance Acts to close loop-holes, legal ingenuity has been fertile in devices. The most fool-proof dodge is apparently to create two dummy investment trusts, each domiciled abroad in a country in which income tax is not levied on companies. Trust No. 1 takes over all the dodger's securities and converts them into War Loan or other stock whose interest is paid to foreign holders without deduction of tax at source. Trust No. 2 becomes the dodger's debtor—purchasing from him, say, a few fields for a million pounds as a mining venture. Trust No. 1 proceeds to invest its income in shares issued to it by Trust No. 2, which in turns pays off its "debt" to the dodger. These and other pleasing illustrations of how the rich live have roused widespread indignation, and there is clearly trouble in store for Sir John Simon if he increases the tax-burden of "the little man" without stopping these forms of large-scale evasion.

Conscription Talk

Sir Auckland Geddes' letter in the *Times* of March 24th should put a stop to the spate of conscription propaganda that is being insinuated into the press. Of the last war he writes:

> With perhaps more knowledge than most of the working of conscription in this country, and as the only man now alive who has been responsible to Parliament for the day-to-day administration of compulsory military recruiting, I hold the fully matured opinion that on balance the imposition of military conscription added little if anything to the effective sum of our war effort.

It is to be noticed that the most energetic advocates of conscription are those who have the reputation of being the most friendly towards the aspirations of Germany. In other words, military conscription, which is not justified on technical grounds, is advocated by people whose object is to obtain in this country, no doubt in a modified form, the kind of discipline and regimentation they admire in Germany. The military correspondent of the *Times* has performed a national service in pointing out that the weakness of our defensive position is not a lack of voluntary help, but failure in organisation. He showed a deep understanding of the English character and of the values which British people are prepared to stand for when he wrote that conscription would violate "the cardinal principle of a free community." To surrender this principle would be "to commit suicide to escape a fear."

All MSS. and letters should be addressed to the Editor, at 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, London, W.C.1.
POSTAGE on this issue is: Inland, 1d.; Foreign, 1½d.; Canada, 1d.

FOR KING AND PORTUGAL?

THOUGH you would not guess it from the Conservative press, the events of the last fortnight have had a profound effect on the people of England. There is a new realisation amongst people of all parties, not least amongst the Conservatives, that an irrational fear of "Reds" and the unthinking confidence of the British ruling class in its capacity to muddle through somehow, have brought Britain to the verge of disaster and helped Hitler to achieve something not far short of European domination. For the first time good-natured people who have been altruistically sympathetic with the victims of aggression in China, Abyssinia and Spain, have become afraid for themselves and their own liberties. They see that we ourselves may be the victims of aggression and that Britain too may be reduced to such a pass that the only price of avoiding war will be obedience to Hitler and Mussolini. The resignation of Mr. Eden and Lord Cranborne was the first intimation that it was possible for the personnel of the British Government to be decided by a foreign dictator. The overnight seizure of a peaceful nation and the open invasion of Spain by Italy and Germany finally brought the danger home to them. The most recent blow is the sight of Lord Halifax and Mr. Chamberlain solemnly denying knowledge of increased German and Italian intervention in Spain, even when it is common knowledge, reported honestly in the *Times* as well as elsewhere, that Franco is now fighting with large new consignments of men and material from the Fascist powers.

The disgust of decent citizens is increased by crows of joy from a section of British Conservatives who seem to take pleasure in British humiliation and to welcome the advance of Fascism on the Continent. It has been a shock to many people to learn that membership of the ruling class is not incompatible in Britain with encouragement of the Powers which obviously menace our independence and our liberties, and that those who organise demonstrations to celebrate the bombing of Barcelona and the threat to British power in the Mediterranean are close associates with certain members of the Government. They can scarcely fail to see a parallel with the gloating enthusiasm of French Fascists at the prospect of victory for the rebel cause in Spain, which can only mean that France is a beleaguered country, with menacing armies on three frontiers. Who, they ask in bewilderment, are the patriots? It becomes clear that in England, as well as in France, it is on the Left rather than on the Right that one must seek for those who cherish our joint heritage of liberty and independence.

The speeches of Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax have not succeeded in dispelling such alarm. They may have had some effect in reminding Hitler of the danger of war if he prefers Czechoslovakia rather than Rumania as his next objective, but their general effect is to encourage the Fascist States. Mr. Litvinov's proposal for a world conference of peaceful states was roughly brushed aside, while Mr. Chamberlain's declaration of solidarity with France is clearly to be interpreted in the light of his repeated desire for a Four-Power Pact with the Fascist Powers. Mr. Chamberlain apparently looks forward to solidarity with a France no longer able or anxious to support the cause of liberty anywhere. On the positive side Mr. Chamberlain declares that we are prepared to fight for the Empire, our vital communications which he may have difficulty in defending by negotiation with Mussolini, and our treaty obligations with Iraq, where there is oil, with Egypt, which is strategically and financially important, and with Portugal, whose connection with British interests it is now difficult to see. (Possibly Portugal might provide us with a colony or two to give to Hitler?)

Are these really the objects for which Britain is prepared to face the unutterable catastrophe of a world war? Would it not be far better, people ask in bewilderment, admit that in isolation Britain cannot defend the Empire, and that since the Chamberlain Government has not thought European civilisation worth saving it is now better to go farther in acquiescence, rather than fight another war in such hopeless circumstances for a cause so selfish and so little likely to produce results better than Versailles and its aftermath? After all, the bulk of the Labour movement abandoned its pacifism in order to support the League in what it hoped would be a genuine attempt to prevent an aggressive war. Labour was tricked and deceived; its idealism grossly exploited. It should know better now than to fall in behind this same Government to fight in a war which, with the present Government in charge, could have no objects relevant to its own ideals. Like Hamlet, the British ruling class has preferred to be "the spectator of its own tragedy, rather than the hero of its own destiny." It is a sad spectacle—but not a reason for making Gibraltar or Hong Kong the excuse for soaking the world in blood.

But a war for the outlying parts of the Empire may not be the problem immediately before us. Mr. Chamberlain has for the time at least consolidated his power, and though this may seem to many people to have put off the danger of Britain being involved in war, the European crisis is likely to be intensified and to take new and more menacing forms in the near future. The French situation, for instance, is not likely to stand still. The Popular Front, which has throughout been patriotic, has been thwarted at every turn by French banking interests which have made stable government impossible and which have found sympathy in British Governing circles. Unless there is a popular government in this country to support the popular cause in France, a civil war, as Mr. Werth's analysis suggests, is by no means impossible, and might be the ideal opportunity for Hitler and Mussolini to make good their threats against democracy—which they call Communism. This particular situation may not arise, but the danger of some such menace has always been one of the primary reasons influencing far-sighted people to deplore the Spanish policy of the British and French Governments. Whether that situation arises or not it is only one of a number of eventualities which are made probable by the existence in this country of a Government which talks of a Four-Power Pact and which Hitler believes to be complacent to his advance.

The urgency of the situation a fortnight ago seemed likely to split the Tory Party and to make it the duty of all those who understood to shelve their differences in an effort to save the democratic cause. For better or worse that opportunity—and it was a desperate expedient—has passed. The task that remains is to build up a determined Opposition in order that the Chamberlain Government may be replaced at the first opportunity. It is a mistake for

those who advocate a Popular Front to go on making demands of the Chamberlain Government; to march about shouting wildly for it to do something about Austria, or Russia, or Spain. Mr. Chamberlain has his own policy or lack of policy and will not be moved into support of a democratic cause anyway. Nor is it possible to state precisely what peace policy a progressive government would adopt when it came into power. The situation is changing with great rapidity; all that could be said is that a progressive government would seek such democratic allies as it could find; would stand for its own liberties and seek to make a reality of a positive peace programme such as has often been discussed in this journal and restated by Mr. Keynes in last week's issue. What will be possible when a Popular Front Government comes to power, no one can tell. The immediate job is to overcome the Party particularism which stands in the way of a union of popular forces. We must rouse from apathy that large section of the population which is still only dimly aware of its danger. Otherwise it may wake up too late to find that we have an authoritarian government established in this country, not in order to save European civilisation which will already be under the jackboot of Hitler, but in order, in the last resort, to plunge the world into bloodshed to preserve an Empire which would no longer be defensible.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

THE CLASS WAR IN FRANCE

NEVER in all these years have I known the situation in Paris to be quite so confused and quite so gloomy. There is in office a Government that has no confidence in itself, and whose Premier has repeated on several occasions that this is not the Government that France needs in the present circumstances. During that fearful week-end a fortnight ago, when German troops were entering Vienna, and France was without a Government, Léon Blum made a desperate attempt to form a Government of *union sacrée*. Armed with the authority of the National Council of the Socialist Party, he went before a meeting of the Opposition parties, and implored them to join the Government. Paul Reynaud and two or three others supported him, and the emotional Henri de Kerillis came forward and shook him warmly by the hand, and said: "*Monsieur Blum, vous êtes un grand français.*" For some days Kerillis had published articles in the *Epoque* in which he admitted that a National Government should include the Communists, for such a Government could not rule "without or against the Paris working class." But, with these few exceptions, the Opposition would not hear of joining a National Government led by Blum and including the Communists, and Blum had to fall back on a Front Populaire combination, very like his own Cabinet of June, 1936. "This isn't June, 1936," the Opposition howled. "Granted," said Blum, "but it is not for you to complain." And when they continued to whine that it was impossible to have the Communists in the Government, it was Daladier (who, heaven knows, had never greatly loved the Communists) who replied: "Are you to exclude the Communists from the Army on the day of mobilisation? And are we, with the threat of war hanging over us, to have the munition workers against us?"

And now the Blum Government—such as it is—has been in office for a fortnight. Blum is a tired, unhappy man. More than once he has told the Chamber and Senate that if only he could be sure that a Government more fitted to the circumstances could be formed, he would gladly resign at once. But—for remarkable reasons which I shall explain later—the prospects of such an "adequate" Government have become worse, rather than better, in the last few days.

The subtle Chautemps having washed his hands of the whole business by resigning office three days before the invasion of Austria, the new Blum Government was faced with a horrifying international situation, and an almost equally difficult internal situation. The National Defence Fund had just been set up by Parliament—but there was nothing to put into it. The Austrian coup had ruined the little financial confidence that still remained; capital, as Blum said, was not only deserting France, but Europe in general; and there could be no question at present of floating a loan of 20 or 30 milliard francs for the Defence Fund; nor could big finance be expected to help the Blum Government. Blum therefore resorted to a number of expedients in order to meet the immediate needs of the Treasury and the Defence Fund—5 milliards of plain inflation, and the transfer of the 4 milliards of "profits" made (as a result of the successive devaluations) by the Exchange Equalisation Fund to the Defence Fund. The Chamber passed the two proposals; but the Senate, which detests Blum as it detests no other man, treated him with insult and contempt and reduced the 9 milliards of fresh money to 5 milliards—which will be just enough to keep the Government going for four or five weeks. For the Senate could never forgive Blum the labour reforms it had, in 1936, been made to vote (so it said) "under the outside pressure of the strikes"; nor, for that matter, his defiant attitude in June, 1937, and the violent campaign conducted in the Socialist press for the drastic reduction of the Senate's powers. However, Caillaux and Gardey, the Gog and Magog of orthodox finance, challenged Blum, not without a touch of grim irony, to produce something better than "mere inflation"; and he accepted their challenge. By the end of this week, at latest, we shall probably know what his programme of far-reaching financial and economic measures is like. For the present there are only forecasts: virtual exchange control, forced conversion, a compulsory loan, a number of nationalisations—in short, a war-time programme. "Too early," some will say. "Maybe," the *Œuvre* remarked; "but must we again wait for Charleroi before pulling ourselves together, before realising that the war *has* practically started?" I do not know if the above forecast is correct; but it seems that, whatever Blum's bill contains, it will be thrown out by the Senate. So, unless I am much mistaken, another change of Government is a matter of a few days, or a couple of weeks at most. Only what kind of Government can take its place?

Blum will, no doubt, be glad to go. This has been a terrible fortnight for him. Nothing could be done about Austria. No doubt the immediate menace of an invasion of Czechoslovakia has been averted. Mr. Chamberlain's statement on the subject has probably been to the good—not that that has saved Czech independence once and for all. But Spain has now become a tremendous problem—both internationally and from the internal French point of view. I shall mention only briefly the Citroen and other strikes as part of the desperate situation Blum has had to face. Stay-in strikes—the largest since June, 1936—*ça manquait encore!* No doubt the Paris working class are feeling very bitterly about Spain; and they have also some reasonable complaints against the employers; but neither of these is sufficient to explain the Citroen strike, the Gnome et Rhone strike, or the holding up of army contracts, or the strikers' demonstration in the Stade Buffalo on Sunday when Jouhaux, the C.G.T. leader, was howled down. The C.G.T. leaders are disturbed by the strike, the Communist leaders have condemned it, and are blaming for it the Pivertistes, the revolutionary left wing of the Socialist Party. Again we hear of Trotskyist and Anarchist influences—those influences which were already responsible for the disastrous public transport strike last December—and the C.G.T. speaks of "provocateurs and irresponsible elements." Fascist provocateurs, or perhaps foreign agents? The Communists are said to be doing their best to prevent the strike from spreading, and to have actually prevented it at Renault's. I can well believe it, for the Communist leaders, and, even more so, the Communist rank-and-file, are patriotic and Jacobin in spirit (as even Kerillis

admits) and deeply conscious of the Hitler-Mussolini menace. No doubt, they feel bitterly about Spain, but I doubt whether they really believe that they are serving Spain by having a munitions strike in France.

Franco is winning, with the help of Italian troops and heavy artillery and 700 aeroplanes from Italy and Germany. Has all the sacrifice, endurance and suffering of the Spanish Republicans been in vain? Will Spain be ruled by the men who dropped their bombs on the women and children of Barcelona and shelled Madrid in vain for nearly two years? How Blum must curse the day when, in the name of Anglo-French solidarity, he agreed to that criminal "lesser evil" called non-intervention. When his Government came into office, he and Paul-Boncour thought that something could still be done. Send some guns and aeroplanes to Barcelona. Occupy Minorca and the Spanish Zone of Morocco; and—who knows?—perhaps the Fascist *Jour* was not entirely wrong when it claimed that the question had even arisen of sending two French army divisions to the Aragon Front. And then came the peremptory order from London: "We shall not burn our fingers in Spain; and don't *you* dare!" Writing in the *Europe Nouvelle*, General Armengaud says:—

> Franco has made promises. But nowadays only realities and guarantees are of any value. There are to-day 700 modern foreign aeroplanes in Spain, and 75,000 foreign troops. Should we not at least prepare to occupy, with the consent of Barcelona, and possibly of Burgos, the island of Minorca and the ports of Alicante and Cartagena? This would at least protect our lines of communication with Algiers and Oran, until the day when the Italians and Germans will kindly have quitted Spanish soil.

Only, the General adds the fatal words—

> But, it can only be a question of an Anglo-French occupation.

Precisely. And that is where not only the plans of the French for saving the Spanish Republic, but also the plans for saving their own skin (which is all that concerns the above General) break down. The British Government is taking a terrible responsibility. Its optimism is incomprehensible.

But a thousand times stranger still is the attitude of the French Right. Most of them are rejoicing over Franco's victories like hysterical Berlin flappers at the sight of the Führer. German air bases threatening Toulouse and Bordeaux, the Pyrenees border threatened with invasion, the sea route to Africa in danger of being cut off—what do they care? *Arriba España,*—and *arriba Francia!* For there is a close connection between events in Spain and the ups and downs of the National Government idea. As I pointed out in the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION several times before, the Fascist and semi-Fascist elements in France have, in the last eighteen months, seen their last and supreme chance of coming into power in a rebel victory in Spain, in a "Fascist encirclement of France." And is it not strange that Laval, that friend and admirer of General Franco, that Laval, who seemed finally discredited, should have come out of his hiding place, after two years' silence, on the very day the rebel troops crossed from Aragon into Catalonia? I remember an interview with Franco in the *Echo de Paris* about a year ago. "*J'adore la France,*" the General said, "*mais le Front Populaire n'est pas la France.*" And I can see Laval come forward one of these days and say: "*You* are now at the mercy of Franco; but *I* can come to terms with him." I think a National Government under Herriot or Daladier on a limited parliamentary basis, and on the lines of Blum's original formula—"from Reynaud to Thorez" may still be possible. But it is no use counting any longer on the eventual support of the Right and the greater part of the Centre. They feel that Franco is winning their war for them. The impulsive Kerillis, who, a fortnight ago, treated Blum as *un grand français*, has now revealed, with equal enthusiasm, the innermost thoughts of his friends on the Right—

> (1) Constitute a directorate (he calls it a "Government of public safety") composed of 5 or 6 strong men (Laval and Flandin among them no doubt).
>
> (2) Send Parliament on holiday for two years. (Did not Laval say: "Parliament can work only in normal times"?)
>
> (3) Dissolve the trade unions.
>
> (4) Establish a press censorship.
>
> (5) Revise the Constitution.

A nice little Fascist plan, which those praying for a Franco victory have been nursing in their bosoms these last eighteen months. On hearing about it, Jouhaux threatened a general strike; and, in any case, it is not clear by what technique—unless it be a greatly enlarged version of the 6th of February—such a plan can be attempted. But it would be the ultimate triumph of Hitler and Mussolini and Franco and Non-Intervention if a rebel victory were to lead to civil war in France. Fortunately, for the present, the "plan" has leaders, but not many signs of any troops. But one cannot tell what pressure may soon come from Spain.

ALEXANDER WERTH

Paris.

LABOUR AND WAR

IN spite of the gloomy saying that the only lesson of history is that men never learn from history, perhaps something may be learnt from the parallel between the present situation and the negotiations between the Trade Unions and the Government in the last war. Twenty years ago organised Labour was sufficiently independent to make its co-operation contingent on the national acceptance of its peace aims by the Government; to-day it knows beforehand, after the Chamberlain speech, that having brought us to this parlous state, the Government still thinks that, apart from the defence of France and Belgium, it would be right for Britain to attempt singlehanded to fight anywhere in the world for our imperial communications and "vital interests."

In 1914 the central feature in organising the nation's war effort was the need for securing the hearty co-operation of organised labour. Mr. Lloyd George, the organiser-in-chief, insists again and again in his *War Memoirs* on the vital importance of this co-operation. "It is obvious," he told the Labour Party Executive, "that no Government can be carried on in this country, whether during war or peace, without, I won't say the support of Labour, but the co-operation of Labour. Upon its determination to help in winning this war, everything depends." This was part of an appeal to the Labour Movement to throw itself wholeheartedly into the production of munitions and to join the Government.

As early as 1915 dilution met with such resistance from the Unions that, says Mr. Lloyd George, he seriously pondered the idea of coercion and only decided in favour of conciliation because the temper of the Unions made coercion too dangerous. As Mr. Fred Smith of the A.E.U. has recalled in a speech this week, the Government's promises to the Unions, in exchange for which they agreed to dilution, were never fulfilled.

But in 1917 a much more serious situation arose. As Professor Temperley puts it in his *History of the Peace Conference*, "Officially . . . Labour was in complete agreement with the Government's war policy; but the whole situation was changed by the Russian Revolution and the unexpected length of the war. The success of the Russian workers in overthrowing the Tsar's power gave confidence to the workers in other countries."

Suggestions began to be popular in labour organisations, says Temperley, that "the Government was incapable of taking steps towards peace." Mr. Henderson resigned from the War Cabinet, Labour favoured the idea of an international Socialist Conference at Stockholm, and the Labour Party and T.U. Congress held a conference in December, 1917, which laid down what they thought were just peace terms. "Thus Labour had a definitely expressed policy of its own in regard to the ending of the war."

Parallel with these developments in the political field, there was growing trouble on the home front. Again, to quote the same authority: "Official trade unionism was unable to oppose the Government's industrial policy." But the rising

discontent found expression in the Shop Stewards' Movement, particularly in the engineering trade.

> The difficulty was made still greater when it became necessary for the Government to seek for more men for the army in the early months of 1918. The "man-power controversy," as it was then called, brought out opposition in the industrial sphere. The official ballot of the A.S.E., announced on the 20th February 1917, gave 121,017 against, and only 27,750 for, the Government proposals; and at various conferences of Shop Stewards, for instance on the 25th January 1918 and the 9th March 1918, the discussion turned upon the possibility of trade-union action to secure an early peace. Some district committees of trade unions proposed that the Government should adopt the war aims of the Labour Party . . . before making any further call upon the man-power of the nation.

Labour and trade union organisations became more and more "eager to press upon public attention the statement of generous war-aims. . . . It was now appreciated by the whole of organised labour that even domestic and industrial grievances, which were more easily understood by the rank and file, could not be redressed so long as the war continued."

How did the Government meet this rising tide of labour discontent? Coercion was even more dangerous than in 1915. Mr. Lloyd George recurs frequently in his Memoirs to the view that to attempt it, in the temper among the workers resulting from the Russian revolution and war weariness, would have meant industrial resistance by powerful Unions, which might easily end in revolution.

> The efforts we were making to comb out more men for the Army were meeting with resistance amongst the Trade Unions, whose loyalty and patriotism had throughout been above reproach. I attached great importance to retaining their continued support in the prosecution of the War. Had they been driven into opposition, a dangerous rift in the home front would have been inevitable. The difficulties with our man-power had almost produced a dead-lock with the Trade Unions. Without their good-will and co-operation, we could not have secured further recruits from amongst the exempted —certainly not without a resistance which might have alienated organised labour throughout the land. It therefore became necessary to negotiate with them. . . . In order to ensure their co-operation it was necessary to place before them with complete frankness the purpose with which we were prosecuting the War.

Mr. Lloyd George tells us very frankly how he met this difficulty. He studied the Labour memorandum of December, 1917, on war-aims and President Wilson's speeches. Then he held a meeting with the Trade Union leaders at Caxton Hall where he told them that what the Government were fighting for was just the same as Labour's peace terms, and that "our one object in the war was to defend the violated public law of Europe, to vindicate Treaty obligations and to secure the restoration of Belgium."

At the same time Mr. Balfour, the Foreign Secretary, cabled President Wilson that Mr. Lloyd George was obliged to make a statement on peace terms, because that was the only way to induce the Trade Union leaders to release more men for the front. He expressed the hope that President Wilson would make a similar statement.

President Wilson had independently come to the conclusion that, since he could not get the Allies to agree to a statement of peace terms that would unequivocally abandon the annexationist aims of their Secret Treaties, he ought alone to make a "comprehensive address" that might prove "the moral turning point of the war" and revive the flagging enthusiasm of Liberal and Labour opinion. That, as the *Intimate Papers* of Colonel House reveal, was the origin of the Fourteen Points speech.

Mr. Lloyd George then returned to the charge; at a meeting at the Central Hall, Westminster, on January 18th, 1918, he told a general conference of Trade Union leaders that "It was not a question of fighting on to gain some big imperialist aim," but in order to realise "those great aims which had been put forward alike by the Trade Unionists, the Government and President Wilson as the objects for which we were committed to fight."

To-day of course we know that these assurances were false. The Allies did not give up their Secret Treaties and instead of negotiating a Peace on the basis of the Fourteen Points, they dictated the Treaty of Versailles in which "big imperialist aims" did in fact play so large a part that the German Empire was shared out under the cover of Mandates, amongst the victorious Powers. But the promises served their turn. The Trade Unions were induced to release for slaughter what Mr. Lloyd George calls "a large, fresh batch" of men, or, more exactly, 150,000 "A" men and 100,000 of other categories, from "an often-sifted residue, all of them holding pledges of absolute or conditional exemption from military service." It was a well-calculated move for exploiting the idealism of Labour which really thought it was fighting to save the world for democracy, which knew less than it does to-day, one hopes, of profiteering in armaments, of imperialism and the value of promises from a National Government.

In 1917 it was difficult for Labour not to accept these deceptive reassurances. Britain was in the midst of war; many of the Liberals who made these promises had genuinely began to cherish the idea of a League of Nations to follow the war and some of them sincerely intended the sort of peace aims which Labour had formulated. To-day these reasons no longer exist: Labour has been consistent in supporting and being willing to run risks for the League and for the system of collective security, and equally emphatic that it would not again take part in an imperialist war. It is now asked once again to surrender its conditions and its bargaining power to further the aims of a Government which has refused to lift a diplomatic finger to check the advance of Hitler or help the workers of Spain and which now explains, by way of inducing Labour to co-operate in war preparation, that it may some day call upon the English working man to fight once again for the British Empire, for British communications in the Mediterranean and for British investments abroad.

THE UNDERDOGS

THERE are still quite a number of people who argue that unemployment insurance is demoralising to "the poor," and that there are many thousands of workers who prefer "the dole" to employment. Such persons usually go on to assume that this happens because benefits are too high, and that it is only necessary to go back to the principles of "deterrence" and "less eligibility" in order to make all well. If, however, those who argue in this way read the latest report of Sir William Beveridge's Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee—which they are of course most unlikely to do—they would be compelled to recognise that the question has another side. Where it does happen that benefits are as high as wages, the explanation usually is that wages are quite intolerably low.

The Beveridge Committee, desiring to discover the actual relationship between normal wage-rates and unemployment benefits, made through the Ministry of Labour a large-sample investigation. They found, of course, that on the average and in the great majority of cases persons in work received a great deal more than persons unemployed, even including allowances to dependents on the one hand and excluding all supplementary earnings by other members of the household on the other. In the case of adult men, for example, the average rate of benefit (including allowances) is 24*s.* 6*d.* a week, whereas the median wage-rate for a normal working week is 55*s.* 6*d.* For adult women the comparable figures are 15*s.* 2*d.* and 30*s.* But, though for the majority there is a very big gap between benefits and normal wage-rates, there are enough exceptions to matter a great deal. For example, even of the adult men 10 per cent. had weekly wage-rates, for full work, of less than 42*s.*, and no less than 25 per cent. of less than 49*s.* Three-quarters were under 67*s.* and 90 per cent. under 76*s.* These figures are for men over 21 years of age. For young men between 18 and 21 separate figures were collected, showing 10 per cent. at less than £1 a week, 25 per cent. under 26*s.* and 50 per cent. under 35*s.* Adult women came out worse still. Of those over 21 well over 10 per cent. got under 23*s.* for full work, 25 per cent. under 26*s.*, and nearly half under 30*s.* The sample

actually showed about 1,000 adult men (over 21) earning wages at a full-time rate of less than a pound a week.

The Beveridge Committee, rightly shocked at the numerous examples of appalling underpayment which its investigation has brought to light, compiled a specimen list of the occupations in which some of these unfortunates were employed, and tried to discover the causes of their condition. The list of occupations makes it clear that, apart from certain special trades, such as piecing in the cotton industry, most of the worst examples of sweating are to be found in trades which are covered neither by a Trade Board nor by any effective machinery for collective bargaining. The sufferers record such occupations as " dance-hall attendant, barman, vanman, porter, caretaker, lodging-house steward, cinema operator, newsvendor, window-cleaner, greyhound-racing kennelman, sausage-skin cleaner, firewood chopper, and fishmonger's assistant. They are in fact the types of workman whom it is most difficult to organise in Trade Unions or to regulate under the Trade Board system as it is. It may, of course, be argued that occupations of this sort are usually filled by workmen so inferior in quality as to be worth no more than they get. Doubtless the group includes a considerable proportion of elderly men who have been driven out of more remunerative trades, and of workers who are in some respect below the average. But in less than one-sixth of the cases investigated for the Beveridge Committee was any evidence offered that the men in question were paid these abominably low wages because of any personal defect. Much more often stress was laid on the unskilled nature of the work, or on the fact that those concerned were doing what was really boys' work in the hope of securing better employment later.

In the light of this investigation it can no longer be happily supposed that Trade Boards and Trade Unions between them have reduced the problem of sweated labour to almost negligible dimensions, even among adult men. The underworld of wretchedly paid workers still exists; and it is not surprising if adults whose normal full-time wages are from 14*s.* to 20*s.* a week, or even from 20*s.* to 30*s.*, do better, especially where they have dependents, on insurance benefit than when they are employed. Nor must it be forgotten that the wages cited are for full-time work, and that these underdogs may often get less without qualifying for benefit.

This situation demands a remedy—not the reduction of benefits but the raising of wages to a more tolerable minimum standard. It is not right that the workers in miscellaneous trades deemed unsuitable for Trade Boards should be left without protection; for in fact they are the most exposed of all to sweating in its worst forms. Herein lies the case for some *general* minimum rate applicable to all forms of employment not covered by special regulation. One way, probably the best, would be to create, side by side with the Trade Boards, a general Minimum Wage Commission, with power both to prescribe overriding minimum rates for different ages and sexes, and to set up special committees to fix rates for trades too small or scattered to be suitable for Trade Boards. Some of these committees might develop later into full Trade Boards; but others would remain as committees, with the simpler and less costly machinery appropriate to smaller or more scattered groups.

Nor should the question of hours of labour be left out of account. There has been no investigation in this case except of the hours worked by young persons. But the evidence which came out in 1936 before the Committee on Young Persons in Unregulated Occupations was amply sufficient to show that here too is a matter urgently needing attention. The Committee then found that nearly half the boys in the van trade were working 48 hours or more a week, and a considerable number as long as 60 hours. Page-boys and lift-boys came out still worse—three-quarters or more being on duty (including meal-times) for as much as 72 hours. Appallingly long hours were also found in garages, and in numerous other occupations outside the Factory Acts. This scandal is greatest where it affects young persons; and the Committee on Wage-earning Children, which draws attention to these facts in its latest report, rightly concentrates upon their claims. But there are also many thousands of adults in unregulated occupations working abominably long hours for low wages—often without any sort of overtime payment.

In 1919 the National Industrial Conference proposed, with the assent of the employers' representatives as well as the Trade Unions, both an overriding Forty-eight Hours Act and a Minimum Wage Commission Act. But the Government brushed these measures aside, on the plea that it was best to deal with both issues by way of collective bargaining, supplemented by Trade Boards in appropriate cases. Doubtless these methods did secure some protection for a majority; but they totally ignored the claims of a large, but almost wholly unvocal, minority of sweated workers. These workers have no spokesmen—for they are too low down the scale for the Trade Unions to reach them. They are too feeble to constitute an electoral interest worth placating. Consequently, they are simply left to suffer. It is sometimes held that their lot is unavoidable because the trades they follow would perish if better conditions were enforced. But it cannot be seriously suggested that greyhound racing, cinemas, hotels and restaurants, garages or dance halls are needy industries, which must be given the right to pay abnormally low wages if they are to survive. There are doubtless a few " marginal " industries—which might be better dead. But most of the worst cases are in highly flourishing occupations, in which low wages are possible because labour is unskilled and unorganised. It is vain to expect Trade Unionism to cleanse these Augean stables without help; and it is past bearing that society should continue to authorise such abominable sweating as the Beveridge Committee and the Committee on Wage-earning Children have revealed. The remedy lies in legislation, on a basis wide enough to protect the workers in scattered and unclassifiable occupations—the real underdogs of industry to-day.

A LONDON DIARY

NAZI propaganda over here is subtle and continuous; it works through muddle-headed and kindly people who still talk about atoning for the wrongs done at Versailles as well as active pro-Nazis who know quite well what they are about. I was glad to see questions in the House about the activities of the Gestapo here; there is a good deal of clearing up that badly needs doing. We are not yet in the position of Austria under Schuschnigg, but we are not quite so wildly far off as decent gentlemanly people suspect. I can give an instance that has recently occurred. An English firm which acts as agent here for a German manufacturer recently received an instruction from the German firm that if they wished to continue business they must dismiss a member of their staff who had Jewish blood. The English firm protested, but the member of the staff, who held a very responsible position, resigned rather than ruin his firm. Blackmail triumphed. Fantastic that such a thing should happen? The sort of fantasy that began with Mr. Eden's resignation and which is going to be repeated throughout the length and breadth of England if people do not rouse themselves to realise that they need a Government which, without any bellicosity or excitement, tells Germany that British people insist on their own liberty and are not open to blackmail or intimidation.

* * *

An English friend just home from Vienna has given me a graphic account of the extraordinarily efficient staff-work behind Hitler's coup in Austria. By breakfast-time on Saturday—less than twelve hours after the ultimatum expired—over a thousand German troops had been landed in Vienna by troop-carrying aircraft, and scores of German bombers were flying over the city dropping leaflets hailing " the National-Socialist Government," which had been formed long after midnight. Within 24 hours of Schuschnigg's fall Nazi officials were examining outgoing trains at the frontiers,

armed with printed volumes with a lettered index containing thousands of names of persons who were to be stopped if they attempted to escape. In the military invasion not the smallest hitch arose in the detailed organisation for the billeting and food supplies of the army and even for the fuelling of tanks, tractors and trucks. Similarly, perfect arrangements had been made for the housing and supplies of the 400 aeroplanes, with their crews and ground staffs, which accompanied the invasion. The precise co-ordination of the operations could only be the result of months of forethought and preparation.

* * *

The lunch arranged by the Children's Minimum Council at the London School of Economics last Wednesday was an interesting affair. You could see on the side the best meals that could be bought with small incomes and the food eaten at the lunch itself could be purchased for 5*d*. a head at current prices. The first speaker, Mrs. Yates, was the wife of an unemployed man: she gave a simple and very moving account of how she spent her weekly budget. Each halfpenny was accounted for, but she pleaded guilty to one extravagance—a few pence were set aside for cigarettes for her husband, who having no work to do (it will surprise Buchmanites) sometimes found life intolerable without a smoke. (People in prison feel the same way.) Lord Horder apologised for touching even remotely on politics. But he could not avoid, he said, seeing a connection between the malnutrition of British children and the fact that, as economic matters are at present arranged here, masses of food are destroyed or thrown back into the sea. He thought something ought to be done about this. Miss Rathbone explained that the programme of the Minimum Council is to increase the distribution of free or cheap milk to children and to nursing and expectant mothers, and to augment the allowances of the unemployed. So far this Council (address 72 Horseferry Road, S.W.1) has done the whole of its excellent work on £600 a year. More money is needed and the Council is now making a public appeal for more funds.

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When Tom Harrisson first told me about his project for Mass Observation I recognised that it had great possibilities, that he was right in saying that neither press proprietors nor political party agents really knew what common people were interested in or what effects their propaganda had. They guess, sometimes rightly, but they do not know in any scientific sense, and the surprises they get at elections and their miscalculations about the public reactions to great events show that there might be practical as well as academic value in a large-scale day-to-day record of English behaviour. But the early activities of Mass Observation disappointed me. I thought Mr. G. W. Stonier probably right in his much misquoted remark about the dottiness of some of Mass Observation's activities. (Mr. Stonier was referring to a Mass Observation poem, not to the basic notion of the movement.) And the first big publication of Mass Observation seemed to me almost meaningless, for a collection of facts are not important in themselves unless they have been observed to test some theory or to supply the information from which a theory may be formed. It reminded me of theses written in American colleges which add up the number of "words denoting colour" in a sequence of poems or calculate how many of the people who commit suicide in the United States lived in apartment houses. In their new booklet, *First Year's Work* (Lindsay Drummond, 2*s*.), the Observers show signs of a more hopeful approach. At least they have the merit of discussing the contradictory taunts of their critics with wit and good humour, and they include an illuminating essay by Professor Malinowski, who discusses the possibilities of Mass Observation developing into a "Nation-wide Intelligence Service." This gives hopes that Mass Observation may do really useful anthropological field work, but if so it must approach its data in a more critical spirit, think out what questions are worth asking and the significance of the answers given. One can observe anything. But would it really be useful to know the number of people with names beginning with A or P who enter a barber's shop on a Tuesday afternoon?

There has come into my hands a price list sent unsolicited to a friend of mine in the country by J. Burns and Co., 33 Dean Street, Soho. This firm, which claims to have "the largest postal business in England devoted to buying used Champagne, Wine and Brandy corks," and assures its clients that "all transactions are private and confidential," offers prices ranging from 3*s*. to 16*s*. a dozen for used champagne corks of various named brands, and is also in the market for specified brandy corks (2*s*. to 24*s*. a dozen) and for hock, Bordeaux and Burgundy wine corks at 1*s*. to 5*s*. a dozen. Clients are notified "when brands start or finish to pay." This is a curious business. Restaurant wine-waiters, one knows, have long been paid by most shippers a commission on such branded corks as they can produce as evidence of "promoted" sales. Hotel-keepers and restaurant proprietors connive at the practice, which incidentally enables them to hire *sommeliers* cheaply, and knowledgeable diners-out habitually ignore in consequence a waiter's recommendations in the matter of wine. Up to a point it is, I daresay, good business for the wine-shipper, but I cannot see what they can make out of the cork-trade's latest manifestations. Cork-brokers have recently begun circularising butlers and servants in private households, whose power to influence their employers choice of wine is very questionable. And now, to judge from the circular addressed to my friend (who happens to be a teetotaller and a magistrate with strong views on concealed commissions) the private consumer of wine is being canvassed—at the wine shipper's expense—in the hope that he will change from Heidsieck, 1923, to, say, Deutz and Gelderman, 1928, because the latter's corks are worth 16*s*. a dozen, as compared with a beggarly 4*s*. a dozen for the Heidsieck. If my means and taste ran to champagne, my personal instinct after reading Messrs. Burns and Co.'s list would be to drink Clicquot, which does not figure in the catalogue. Nor am I encouraged to demand Rhine wine shipped by Sichel and Shone (*sic*) because I can recoup myself at a penny a time for each bottle. The sooner the wine trade suppresses this objectionable method of sales promotion, the better.

* * *

A friend, reading the Byzantine chronicler, John Malalas, found the following instructions sent to the Roman Emperors Theodosius II and Valentinian III in the fifth century: "Imperat per me Dominus meus et Dominus tuus Attila ut sibi palatium instruas ut veniat"—"Attila, your master and mine, commands you to prepare a palace for his arrival." For the arrival of the Führer in Rome not only a palace is being prepared but a new railway station is being built. And, still more important, over a hundred of his own police have been sent to Rome to secure his safety. CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to R. G. Gane.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Extracts should not be sent without their context. The article or passage should be sent in full with the proposed excerpt marked.

"Women already hold too many of the best posts," declared Councillor W. H. S. Colbourn at yesterday's meeting of the Gloucester Education Committee. Councillor Colbourn said if women were to be given all the best jobs men would soon be pushed out altogether and in a few generations human life would become extinct.—*Daily Herald.*

Real prosperity is abroad in the land. Good times are here But those who are plunged in gloom will not believe it. . . . The net sale of the *Daily Express* last week was 2,446,000 copies, the largest net sale we have ever known.—Lord Beaverbrook in *Daily Express.*

Air Raid Precautions. An Antiseptic to-day is essential in every home; indispensable wherever there is the slightest wound. Be Prepared! Buy a bottle of Iglodine Antiseptic at once.—Advert. in *News Chronicle.*

If you are to have modern warfare—for which this country is determined to prepare herself then you must take the consequences. And the references to the open Bible at Eastbrook Hall (if so be that the Bible was opened at Judges vii., verse 20) would reveal the old battle cry: "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon."

To-day we have altered it so as to read: "The bomb of the Lord and of Franco"—or perhaps we are only to allow it to read: "The bomb of the Lord and of Chamberlain?" Whether sword or bomb, the results are much the same. What are not the same are the purposes of the contending forces in Spain. And to me, as to so many other Christians, it is clear that Franco is on the side of the angels.—Rev. Frank Harwood, quoted in *Yorkshire Observer*.

Mr. Chamberlain is not a pessimist—yet. He believes that the moral force of a united England and an organised England may avail to prevent the "show-down" the pessimists, of both schools, take for granted. That is why he is negotiating with Italy, despite some evidence that Italy is not playing the non-intervention game quite fairly in Spain.—*Birmingham Post and Journal*.

Is HE withholding that "great and terrible day of the Lord" to enable YOU to hear His good news, called Gospel, told by a man whose qualification, B.S. (Bible Saturated, NOT Bachelor of Science) denotes the "approved" preacher—Pastor Chillington, rightly dividing, intelligibly interpreting the inspired Word of God, on Sunday at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m., in St. Oswald Street Church, Old Swan.—Advert. in *Liverpool Echo*.

EDNA (Manchester).—My brother makes me mad. He is always right, and contemptuous of everything else. I mean, of our clergyman and Mr. Eden and Hitler and mother and me. How can we knock the conceit out of him?—*Modern Woman*.

THE FOLLY OF FLOGGING

THE Committee on Corporal Punishment, having investigated one of the most unsavoury corners of the English penal system, recommends a drastic spring cleaning, the abolition of birching in the Juvenile Court, of sentences of whipping in Courts of Assize and Quarter Sessions, of flogging for offences against discipline in Borstal Institutions. If Parliament acts on its advice all judicial floggings will go into the dustbin of repeal and there will remain just one dirty little cupboard, containing the "cat" and birch which the prison authorities believe to be necessary for the occasional punishment of violent prisoners and the spiritual consolation and encouragement of timid, inept or brutal prison officers.

Illogical and unjustifiable as this exception is, opponents of flogging cannot but welcome wholeheartedly a report which proposes the abolition of 96 per cent. of all corporal punishment inflicted by police and prison officers, and envisages a time when "it will be found possible to dispense altogether with the use of this form of punishment." The recommendations are the result of a study of the facts and figures of corporal punishment and of the after histories of men who have been flogged. Whipping is condemned not because it is degrading and brutal, but because it is unnecessary. Intelligent people have always known this. The damning facts have been published repeatedly in the old days by Henry Salt and the Humanitarian League and more recently by the Howard League for Penal Reform. The legends of flogging die hard, but in this Blue Book is a well-authenticated post-mortem on each of them—old and new. Once more it is shown that the Garrotting Act of 1863, so far from stamping out garrotting, was not passed until after the outbreak had ceased. The statistics of robbery in Liverpool from 1887 to 1894 are reproduced showing that in the three years after Mr. Justice Day's famous flogging assizes there was more robbery with violence than there was before. The fourteen Cardiff floggings of 1908 are shown to have had no effect in reducing the number of robberies, which did not fall until after two later assizes where no flogging sentences were passed. Moreover, the after history of the fourteen men flogged, shows that two were again convicted of, and another charged with, robbery with violence, another was later convicted of assault with intent to rob, while "only two or three are believed to have lived honestly after their conviction in 1908."

Again, as regards Glasgow and Manchester, the Committee says "it is generally believed in Scotland that the offence of living on immoral earnings was stamped out in Glasgow as a result of the passing of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1912, which first introduced flogging as a penalty for this offence in Scotland. In fact no sentence of corporal punishment was imposed under this Act throughout the whole of Scotland from 1912 to 1922 . . . and by that time the number of convictions in Glasgow had already fallen from 47 in 1913 to seven in 1922." The allegation from Manchester, made, amongst others, by the Chief Constable is that an increase in the years 1932–1934 of cases of living on immoral earnings was checked by four sentences of flogging passed by the Recorder. The Committee, while expressing deference due to Chief Constables, points out that if this explanation were sound the decrease in offences should have come earlier than it did, and that in fact, by a strange coincidence, the increase synchronised with the onset of the industrial depression and the decrease with the partial lifting of that depression! Apart from the general effect of these sentences on potential existers on immoral earnings, the Committee investigated the effect on the men flogged. Two were flogged in 1932; one repeated the offence and was flogged again in 1933; the second, within a few weeks of his release from the term of imprisonment which accompanied his flogging sentence, was convicted of rape and causing grievous bodily harm. One has not since been convicted of the same offence.

All this is insignificant in comparison with the failure of flogging as a penalty for robbery. Nobody really believes that it is a necessary defence against those who live on a prostitute's earnings, against indecent exposure, male importuning, shooting at the King, or even against villains who kill horses without a knacker's licence or institute processes against ambassadors. But many people uphold flogging for robbery because they honestly believe that in this case violent crime must be met by violent punishment, and that nothing short of flogging will effectively protect society. They, not the humanitarians nor the diehards, decide the policy of the State in relation to crime. The Cadogan Report should bring them over to the side of abolition, for it publishes those little-known but vital comparative statistics of robbery and assault with intent to rob in England and Wales and in Scotland from 1890 to 1934. The Committee reports:

> In both countries there has been a progressive decrease in this type of offence, but the drop has been much greater in Scotland where the offences are not punishable by flogging, than it has been in England.

It concludes that:

> After examining all the available evidence, we have been unable to find any body of facts or figures showing that the introduction of a power of flogging has produced a decrease in the number of offences for which it may be imposed or that offences for which flogging may be ordered have tended to increase when little use was made of the power to order flogging or to decrease when the power was exercised more frequently.

The general futility of flogging is emphasised by its failure to intimidate even those who have tasted the lash. Two men, flogged for robbery under arms, confided their intentions to a Prison Governor. "One said, 'Next time I shall take care not to carry a gun'; the other said, 'Next time I shall use my gun.' It will be noted that in neither case had the offender any thought of abandoning robbery." The Committee analysed the records of 440 men convicted of robbery from 1921 to 1930. Of 142 flogged 55 per cent. were later reconvicted of serious crime; of 298 not flogged the percentage was 43.9. Nor was this difference attributable to any higher proportion of first offenders among those not flogged. Among first offenders the subsequent record of the flogged was worse than the record of those who were not flogged.

The story is one of the unrelieved failure of corporal punishment to intimidate actual or to deter potential criminals,

and the evidence of the Juvenile Courts, expressed in such facts and figures as were available, leads to a similar conclusion.

True to tradition, the judges of the King's Bench expressed the opinion through the Lord Chief Justice, that flogging should be retained and extended to apply to rape and carnal knowledge of a girl under 13. The Committee's comment on this proposal and on other witnesses' suggestions for extending flogging is to append a list of the offences for which it was recommended—a motley collection including blackmail, sodomy, assaults with razors, bayonets and broken bottles, cruelty to animals. It adds that it cannot discern any common factor except that these offences "all excite special indignation." The Cadogan Committee paid comparatively little heed to the psychologists though it heard them politely; but the Lord Chief Justice and his followers have taught by example what the learned could not teach by exhortation—that it is the floggers who are the sentimentalists.

So the Cadogan Committee, conservative, respectable, untainted by association with reforming humanitarians, has presented a Report, grounded in experience, unassailable as to facts, moderate in statement, recommending the abolition of all judicial flogging and birching as unnecessary and inexpedient.

One may wonder why the Committee recommends the retention of flogging in prisons and its extension, in the interest of standardisation, to cover the local prisons of Scotland and the misdemeanants in English prisons. The facts of recidivism among prisoners flogged (such as the case of the gipsy flogged twice for assaulting officers in one sentence in 1933) show that prison floggings are as unsuccessful as judicial floggings in improving a prisoner's behaviour. Retention is recommended "as an ultimate sanction" because the Committee has accepted the official view that but for the fear of flogging, many men would plan deliberate assaults on officers and that as they are already in prison, the only possible substitutes would be penalties which are worse than flogging, such as leg-irons and dark cells. It accepts the claim that States which forgo flogging as a prison punishment all use even more horrible penalties, or that their officers are less restrained from retaliation than are English and Scottish officers. Neither of these claims is justified. Sweden has done without corporal punishment for twelve years; its legal abolition has been unanimously recommended by a Commission of which the Head of the Prison Administration was a member. Neither irons nor dark cells are used, and there is no ground whatever for suggesting that Swedish prison officers are less restrained and disciplined than our own.

Flogging has grown rare in English prisons, as discipline has become more natural and rational. It is inconsistent with the humane policy of the Prison Commission, for the man who is capable of carrying out that policy will refuse to have any part in flogging—or hanging. Of course, the real arguments against flogging are moral and philosophical. The Committee has wisely ignored them, for the English are a practical people.

OPPOSITION

I SOMETIMES wish that a rich man would found a paper called *Opposition*, the policy of which would be to oppose everything proposed by persons in authority. Governments might change and programmes alter, but *Opposition* would remain the unrelenting critic of them all. It would take no sides permanently. Its one guiding principle would be the belief that there is always a case against as well as a case for, and it would state the case against with all its might. At first sight, such a policy looks as if it might lead to insincerity. But I do not think it would. A man who frankly confesses that he is opposing something for opposition's sake is no more insincere than the lawyer who defends a blackmailer or a murderer. The English law assumes that every accused person, however guilty he may seem, has a case, and the lawyer does not lose his reputation for honesty by stating the case as effectively as possible. *Opposition*, it seems to me, would help to clear the public mind by compelling people to look on both sides of every question and by providing them with fresh materials for forming their own conclusions. It used to be said of Parliament that "it is the duty of an Opposition to oppose." That may not be entirely true, for the Member of Parliament who opposes never admits that he does this, not from conviction, but for the sake of opposition. Even in Parliament, however, it seems to me that opposition is usually a good thing even when the Opposition is wrong. It keeps freedom of thought alive, and a good Government is probably even strengthened by it.

If such a paper as I have suggested were ever published, it would have to keep its eye, not only on Governments, but on local authorities. For all people who get into authority are inclined to become foolish and to propose to change things for the worse. Even to-day, for example, with all the fuss that is being made about the preservation of beautiful places, one is never surprised to learn that some local authority has discovered yet another beautiful place to destroy or, at least, to injure. Only last week, we were told of proposals to widen certain Surrey lanes and so to alter the character of Surrey. There may be a case for widening the lanes, but they should not be widened until the case against has been fully stated.

The case against seems to me to be overwhelming. By great good fortune, the monstrous city of London has in the Home Counties a pleasure-garden of woods and lanes and streams which still in great measure preserves the appearance of an enchanting countryside. If Surrey and Buckinghamshire were a thousand miles away, thousands of Londoners would visit them for the beauty of their landscapes. Surrey may be over-populated and over-full of houses, and some of its roads may be filled with long impatient processions of motor cars on Saturday and Sunday; but, by a miracle, large areas of the country are so thickly wooded that houses, population and motor cars are lost to view, and it is still possible in many places to look around and enjoy the sense of solitude almost as fully as if the most enormous city in the world were not just a few miles away. People often say, "Surrey is spoiled"; but Nature and the preservers of commons have seen to it that there is still plenty of unspoiled Surrey left. Walk along its narrow lanes on any day in midweek, and you will feel that even modern man, the arch-uglifier of all time, has succeeded in injuring it very little. On Sunday, it may be admitted, more motor cars pass along the lanes than nature-lovers as sensitive as Ruskin would approve of. But the motorists evidently get some pleasure from the sight of the narrow, winding lanes, or they would go elsewhere. The poetry of earth is never dead, even when seen from the inside of a motor car with closed windows. And I feel sure that, when an ordinary motorist drives along a narrow lane, he does so because he regards narrow lanes as at least pretty.

Unfortunately, when motorists invade a countryside, there are always people who set about thinking of ways of helping them to drive through it as fast as possible. The authorities seem never to realise that motorists as well as pedestrians may like a countryside simply because it is impossible to drive fast in it. "You like this part of the country?" they say. "Well, as you're motorists, we'll do what we can for you by building you a really good road along which you'll be able to drive so fast that you'll hardly be able to see the landscape as you whizz through it." Hence the fine roads down Glencoe and along the shore of Loch Lomond. I did not see Glencoe before the new road was built, but, as I drove down it some time ago, I could not help wondering whether the place had not lost in majesty what it had gained in modernisation. I am in favour of good roads even in remote places, but not of what are called good motor roads. Good motor roads should be built only where men drive in order to get from place to place as quickly as possible, not where they drive for the enjoyment of what they see in the course of the journey. There should be a clear distinction made between

pleasure roads and business roads; and business roads should never be allowed to intrude into those parts of the country to which men go mainly for rest and holiday.

It may be argued that there are a good many motorists who drive in Surrey for business reasons, and who find their progress impeded by a constant succession of dangerous bends and by narrow lanes which make it difficult to pass a dawdling car in front. This is true, but I fancy that if a plebiscite were taken of all who drive through Surrey lanes even on the most crowded Sunday, it would be found that nine out of ten of them prefer the lanes narrow. As for dangerous bends, the truth is, of course, there is no such thing as a dangerous bend. There are only bends round which it is dangerous to drive dangerously. I have never seen a bend in a Surrey lane which was in the slightest degree dangerous, provided everybody drove with ordinary care and common sense. As things are, unfortunately, one motorist in fifty is a semi-imbecile and drives round a so-called dangerous bend on the wrong side of the road as though he were the sole inhabitant of the county. If you drive through Surrey on a Sunday you will be certain to meet more than one of him. I do not see why, however, the lanes should be destroyed for his sake. The proper way to deal with him is to have a system of road policing which would keep a watch on dangerous drivers and, after a third offence, deprive them of their licences for life. Rather than destroy the lanes, indeed, I should like to see a ten-mile speed limit imposed in the lanes, though I should not care for that. The great object of all sensible men should be to preserve the Home Counties, apart from the main roads, as places where human beings want, not to go fast, but to go slow.

I wish, indeed, that the authorities would begin to give their attention less to roads and more to motorists. Many eminent authorities, I know, will not agree with me, but it seems to me that the problem of the selfish motorist is immensely more important than any problem relating to road-widths and surfaces. I have driven along roads that seemed to be paved with broken bottles and along roads so skiddy with mud that I was flung into a ditch with a smashed windscreen against a stone wall; but my life has never been imperilled except through my own fault or through the fault of some other driver. Hence I do not believe that the authorities, by providing us with mechanically perfect roads, will make the world safe for motorists. Most of the accidents I have seen have happened on roads so wide that you would have thought that accidents were impossible. It is drivers, not roads, that are mainly responsible for the huge casualty-lists.

I think, therefore, that the Surrey authorities will have to put forward a pretty strong case if they are to meet the case of the opposition to their road-widening scheme. Unless they believe in speed for speed's sake, it seems to me they have not a leg to stand on. Sometimes I wonder whether many of the activities of public bodies are not due to the restless desire of the members to do something or other—no matter what—in order to show that they are practical men. There is usually somebody on a committee who has a passion for making proposals. If there are railings round a park, he proposes that they shall be pulled down. If there are no railings round a park, he proposes that they shall be put up. He persuades himself that whatever is is wrong, and that almost any change is a change for the better. He seems to have a particular antipathy to anything beautiful and, if there is only one picturesque row of old houses in a village, those are almost certain to be the houses that he proposes to knock down. He has, it must be admitted, usually a case for what he proposes—insanitary conditions, danger to life and health and so forth—but he is curiously tolerant of bad conditions in houses that happen to be eyesores. I do not suggest that the Surrey authorities are inspired by dislike of the beauty of their county, but I think that their latest proposals reveal a certain indifference to it.

After reading of them, I was doubly convinced of the importance of founding a paper in which all schemes proposed by all kinds of authorities should be resolutely opposed till they had been clearly proved to be, not baneful, but beneficial. There is much virtue in being "again the Government." Without opposition nothing is safe, not even a Surrey lane.

Y. Y.

THE DOCTORS START ADVERTISING

READERS of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION will have seen in its recent advertisement pages a series of announcements issued by the British Medical Association, warning the public as to the dangers of drinking, or of giving to children, "unsafe" milk. In these announcements, the B.M.A., representing the great majority of the practising doctors in this country, quotes the words of a resolution passed by its members: "Only milk complying with the conditions required for the designations 'tuberculin-tested' or 'pasteurised,' or preferably both, can be safely consumed without boiling." Attention is drawn to the fact that about two thousand deaths a year in Great Britain are due to bovine tuberculosis—a disease "carried by unsafe milk"; and reference is also made to numerous outbreaks of other epidemic diseases undoubtedly traceable to the consumption of contaminated milk.

Before going on to what seems to me the most important aspect of the experiment in Health advertising which the B.M.A. has begun, it may be as well to emphasise that its pronouncements as to the dangers of germ-laden milk are the expression not of a passing medical fad, but of conclusions at which nearly all competent investigators of the problem have arrived. Of all single articles of food, milk is for human beings—especially for children—the nearest to a complete one. It is rich in the three classic essentials of food, proteins, fats, and carbohydrates. Also it contains all the known essential vitamins, A, B, C, D, and E; whilst among its normal constituents are a large number of minerals in varying amounts—among others, iron, phosphorus, calcium, iodine, sulphur, potassium, sodium, copper, magnesium, manganese, zinc and chlorine. Some of these minerals we now know to be essential to healthy human life and growth; whilst of others we do not yet know the exact functions, though from the fact of milk being the sole natural food of infants we may assume that each has nutritive value. A certain amount of milk consumed daily may be regarded as a safety measure throughout our lives; but during the period of growth, from birth to later adolescence, a far more liberal allowance may be regarded as physiologically essential.

Last year, His Majesty's Stationery Office published the First Report of the Advisory Committee on Nutrition, appointed by the Ministry of Health and the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Committee including such recognised experts as Professor Mellanby, Sir John Boyd Orr, Professor Cathcart, and Sir F. Gowland Hopkins. Outstanding among the comments and recommendations of the Committee were these: "The desirable amount of milk for children is from one to two pints per day; for expectant or nursing mothers about two pints per day, and for other adult members of the community half a pint daily." . . . "From the health standpoint there is no other single measure which would do more to improve the health, development and resistance to disease of the rising generation than a largely increased consumption of *safe* milk by mothers, children and adolescents" (italics are mine). What is meant by "safe" milk is explained in a pamphlet issued in 1936 by the Ministry of Health. "It is an unfortunate fact," we are informed in this Memorandum, "that milk is a medium through which disease may be conveyed to man. Milk, however, can be rendered safe for consumption by suitable heat treatment such as by efficient pasteurisation or boiling. The ideal is milk from perfectly healthy cows, but herds in which all the cows are perfectly healthy are at present relatively few. Where such milk is not available, the milk should be pasteurised or boiled before use." Quotation may also be made from the Bulletin of the

Health Organisation of the League of Nations, which records the "considered and emphatic opinion that all liquid milk for human consumption should be adequately pasteurised or boiled."

All this affords sufficient evidence that the "Safe Milk" propaganda of the B.M.A. is not that of a passing fad of the doctors, but of certain truths of great importance to the public—truths about which there is very little difference of opinion among those who have seriously studied the matter. Bacteriological purity of the milk supply is very different from, and much more than, what is generally meant by cleanliness. The extensive advertising of the Milk Marketing Board has certainly given no hint of this difference.

Some idea of the prevalence of bovine tuberculosis among cattle in this country may be gathered from the Report of the Cattle Diseases Committee of the Economic Advisory Council, published in 1934. The Committee came to the conclusion that at least 40 per cent. of cows in our dairy herds are infected with tuberculosis, as compared with approximately 12 per cent. in Canada and 4 per cent. in the United States. As some people seem still to suppose that pasteurisation is a commercially impracticable scientific procedure, it may be well to point out that, even at present, 90 per cent. of the milk sold in London is pasteurised, without measurable diminution of nutritive value other than a slight reduction in vitamin C content. This can easily be made good by adding a very little orange juice to the daily dietary. It may be agreed that pasteurisation represents a policy of second-best. Naturally, an adequate supply of germ-free milk, needing no sterilization, is the ideal at which we should aim; but at present such an ideal is quite out of our reach.

So much for the "facts" behind this particular publicity campaign. Much more significant and interesting is the break with tradition which this new activity of the British Medical Association implies.

It is not so long ago that few doctors were prepared to sign their names to articles contributed to a lay newspaper. Even to-day, I, who in the course of the last twenty years must have contributed well over a thousand signed articles on medical subjects to the non-medical press, am frequently asked how I dare to allow my name to be published. In fact, I have never had fear of, or had trouble with, the General Medical Council on this account. Yet, again and again, doctors have their names removed from the Medical Register because of articles they have contributed to newspapers—the reason for their expulsions being that they have been found guilty of "infamous conduct in a professional respect." They have, in fact, been found guilty of self-advertising—a practice which the majority of doctors regard as professionally and socially undesirable. In this matter, I agree with the majority of my colleagues. If I wrote an article for the Daily Twister in which I described some new method of treating rheumatism, or cancer, or childbirth, in which I claimed to be exceptionally expert, I should expect to be haled before the General Medical Council, and to have my name removed from the Register—and I should know quite well that I had got what I was asking for. The prejudice of the medical profession against commercial advertising by its members is as strong to-day as it has ever been; and I hope that it will remain so.

Almost every advertisement that we read in the papers is there because some individual or some company hopes thereby to lure some of the public's money into his or its pocket. Few advertisements are printed for the purpose of benefiting those who read them. That is why I think this publicity plunge of the B.M.A. so revolutionary and so significant. "Why should the devil have all the best tunes?" asked General Booth; and we may well ask the parallel question: "Why should those whose sole purpose is to make private profit at the public expense have the best and most effective advertising and the best publicity spaces in the newspapers?"

The Pure Milk advertising is not the first manifestation of the new spirit which is developing within the medical profession. A couple of years ago, the British Medical Association started a valuable propaganda relative to the nutritional needs and nutritional actualities of English people. The B.M.A. and Sir John Orr, between them, have, in my opinion, rendered the public in this matter a service of immeasurable value. Questions of nutrition have become "news" and "politics"; and, although the action of the doctors was received with a marked coldness in official quarters, it is evident that the fire which the B.M.A. and Sir John have lit is still burning and is constantly being fed with fresh fuel.

I hope that the B.M.A. will develop and extend its educational activities. The art of advertisement is not necessarily an unworthy one. It is the content and the purpose of so many advertisements that are responsible for their ill-repute in the non-commercial world. But, as I, and doubtless others, have often pointed out, the essence of an advertisement is statement expressed in such a way as to establish connection with the average reader's mind. Organised health propaganda has hitherto been for the most part singularly dull and ineffective. Most people discover very little truth for themselves, though they are equipped with a living structure to which truth, suitably prepared, may attach itself. That this scion may "take," and live in organic union with the mind on which it is grafted, attention must be gripped, and that profounder and more prolonged development of attention known as interest must be evoked. Such are the uses and functions of advertisement, which, like most other instruments, lends itself equally to good and to ignoble ends, according to the quality and purpose of those who control it.

Perhaps the most urgent of all health reforms, without which many others will be of little avail is the education of the public; the dangers and weakness of an uninstructed democracy are well known. By systematic lectures, by leaflets, by posters and by advertisements in the papers, the public should be kept informed of the latest additions to our knowledge and of their significance and application. The B.M.A. has made a good start.

HARRY ROBERTS

Correspondence

WHAT OUGHT WE TO DO?

[The following letters are selected as representative opinions from a large correspondence on this subject. May we appeal to correspondents to be brief?—Ed., N. S. & N.]

SIR,—What does it matter who is in charge of our affairs—Chamberlain, Eden, Baldwin, Churchill—when the essential fact remains that the average man simply does not intend to fight for the "freedom" of Spain, Austria, or Timbuctoo, or even, it may be suspected, for the integrity of Gibraltar or Malta?

So much of "me" and "they." "'We' must do this . . ." Must "we"? And who is actually going to do it? In the final resort, brother Platitude and comrade Democrat, are you prepared to have your bowels torn out on the barbed wire, or am I to do it for you?

And in any case, to what end? What if the whole Empire crashes, does it matter to me? Surely not to you, champions of democracy. Why fight for a capitalist empire, and how can you fight for the (alleged) liberties of Spain, Austria, China and Abyssinia without fighting for your English tyrants at the same time?

But if we lose the trade route to India, etc. . . . ? My wages will be reduced from £3 17*s.* 6*d.* to £3 13*s.* (perhaps); is the four bob worth risking my skin for? Surely not, says every wise cowardly skunk.

But after "they" have "digested" Austria, etc., they will have a go at England. Perhaps, but why not wait and see (arming discreetly meanwhile, of course). If we stay we may die; if we go we almost certainly will.

"They will drop bombs all over England." It would be a pity if they destroyed St. Paul's, Buckingham Palace and the Zoo, to say nothing of the greenhouse I have just erected; but there are quite a lot of places (*and* people) I should like to see destroyed. With luck they might catch them. Anyway, I have only another 40–30–20 (fill in as required) years to live.

Let us stamp out —— and their like; nothing but gangsters, and make the world safe—our glorious heritage, this sceptred isle. But the British Empire is (or was) the greatest gangster of them all; the world's crook retired on his loot. Why fight for old pirates like Drake or the new ones to come; "What has posterity . . .?"

The average man does not express himself like this, but these are the thoughts which have seeped into his subconscious mind from unknown sources.

He does not intend to fight; at any rate till the enemy are at his gates. The British Empire is therefore like an old woman threatening a drunken bully with an umbrella. Why do it? Throw the umbrella away and trust to luck that you don't get a sock in the jaw. Manufacture arms by all means, but you had better make a few robots to use them. P. J. LANE

44 Gorseway, Rush Green, [Live Dog]
Romford, Essex.

SIR,—Mr. Joad is to be congratulated on having provided, in your last issue, a cool oasis amidst the current war talk. But his case for peace could be strengthened.

In his article, "On Not Fighting Fascism," he discussed as possible the absorption by Hitler of "all the territories (in South-East Europe) with the desire for which he is credited." If we had to contemplate a threatening Napoleonic conquest of the Danubian nations, it would be more difficult to argue against general war. But I suggest that the fears in this direction are, properly, unnecessary fears.

The National Socialist creed appears to be, Germany for the Germans and Germans for Germany. Cruel as it may be, the resulting cry that "we don't want the Jews," also means that Germans don't want a Germany incorporating Czechs, Hungarians, Roumanians, or any other people foreign to themselves. To argue from an essentially German Austria to a Czechoslovakia which, in its ethnographic borders and outside its German territories, stands as essentially non-German, is likely to be, therefore, a radical mistake.

What, after all, has the Nazi treaty-breaking amounted to but a forcible effort to realise an all-in Germany, despite the vetoes and alienations of 1919? To the power politics, which through successive centuries brought us into collision with Spain, Holland, France, Russia and Germany in turn, an enlarged and stronger Germany is hateful; but are we not seeking to escape from the infested jungle of power politics? I suggest that we need to avoid confusion between zeal for democracy and the fear that would organise force against natural justice, lest a country with a different political system should become too strong? P. REDFERN

Meadow End, Clement Road, Marple Bridge.

SIR,—I disagree with five points in Mr. Joad's article in your issue last week.

(*a*) He says that "the iniquitous Versailles Treaty is the source of all subsequent evils" and that "hunger and humiliation produced Hitler." No one denies that the Peace Treaty was iniquitous, but if it alone has produced a Fascist regime in Germany can Mr. Joad explain why Italy—one of the victorious nations—was the first country to turn Fascist? He cannot argue that Italy was humbled and goaded to extreme measures by the Allies. Also, how does he explain that Poland, which only became a nation as a result of that treaty, is now semi-Fascist? Or, for that matter, why there is a Fascist Party in nearly every European country.

(*b*) Mr. Joad thinks it is illogical of the Left to denounce the German conquest of Austria, when they have previously denounced the clause forbidding the union of those two countries. Surely he can differentiate between a voluntary union of two countries and the conquest of one by the other.

(*c*) Again, Mr. Joad suggests that if Hitler had all the countries he wanted, he might be sated and begin to behave himself. German prosperity is based on the arms industry. Can anyone seriously suggest that if Germany conquered Czechoslovakia and the Ukraine the iron and steel magnates would quietly go out of business and lose their profits?

(*d*) Mr. Joad encourages us to wait for a year or two until there is a regular transatlantic aeroplane service and assures us that America will come down on the side of the democracies. But if democratic policy is to allow the Fascist countries to conquer whom they will, I cannot see for the life of me what difference one more passive democratic spectator will make.

(*e*) Mr. Joad says "a day gained for peace is a day gained." It is true we all want peace, but we may differ as to its definition. It is tragic to talk about preserving peace in Europe when we look at Spain and Austria. I wonder if Mr. Joad has read about the suicides in Vienna. I wonder if he has the imagination to conceive of the sort of peace the Jews and Socialists in Austria are enduring now.

In conclusion, I would like to protest against the frivolous suggestions of the last paragraph. If we are just to look for some chance happening to save us, then all discussion of policy is useless. When the peoples of Spain, Austria and Czechoslovakia are looking to the western democracies to help them, it is to some of us revolting levity to tell them to wait until Hitler is bitten by an adder. A. M. NEWTH

121 Gough Road,
Edgbaston, Birmingham, 15.

SIR,—THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION is reflecting what I have so often heard said recently by quiet people who take little or no part in active political work. Mr. Chamberlain's policy, with its emphasis on rearmament and its lack of emphasis on constructive peace efforts, repels them, but it is only fair to say that the Opposition policy—or, perhaps, its statement of policy—is little more satisfying. In fact, the complaint from these people at the absence of a clear, united and comprehensive statement from the Opposition leaders is bitterly expressed.

It is true that Mr. Attlee at the end of his speech on March 25th proclaimed the need for a policy of redress of economic grievances, but it is amazing that, with the magnificent sounding-board provided by the recent debates, the Labour contributions should have been so lacking in point and substance. One would have thought that, in such a situation, every speech would have said what the Labour Party are prepared to do. It is no sufficient answer, in present circumstances, for the current Labour manifesto to urge negotiations for the political and economic appeasement of Europe and the summoning of the Assembly. We need a plain statement of what Labour would say to the Assembly if it represented this country. In other words that means, as we all know, what is this great possessing country prepared to contribute to a just and generous world settlement?

Now, the fundamental weakness of the Prime Minister's position is that he cannot answer this question, for his very statement of the prime objects for which this country would fight shows clearly that the one thing that really matters to his party is the inviolability of the Empire: what we have we hold. And, as you point out, unless the Labour Party are prepared to oppose to this view a daylight clear policy of appeasement which must involve sacrifices from us, they will sooner or later be dragged into a Save the Empire War.

The responsibility for the present situation lies at least as heavily on the Opposition parties as on the Government. I am one of many who believe that the majority of the nation would have welcomed at the last election a united progressive leadership which might have put the Tories out of office. For years past it has been evident that international affairs were of supreme importance, and the leaders who, confronted with this situation, refused to unite the progressive forces have let us down. They fall in behind the demand for rearmament but make no serious effort to fight the dictators with ideas and policies—which might at least add to their embarrassments.

I am convinced that Mr. Keynes is on the right track in the last paragraph of his fine article. British policy must be based on the difference between right and wrong, between generosity and greed. Those are distinctions which plain men can understand. The challenge to progressive leaders is clear—they must co-operate or perish. And that slogan would serve equally for a national and for an international constructive progressive policy. Is it impossible for men like Mr. Keynes to take the initiative in uniting us?

STILL HOPING

SIR,—Mr. Byron, who shows such an obvious and admirable desire to promote clear and honest thinking in a time of crisis, must yet, I feel, have left others besides myself somewhat perplexed. English civilisation, he says, stands for freedom, the freedom which Lord Acton so rightly said "is not the means to a higher political end, but is itself the highest political end"; and our ruling class, Mr. Byron continues, is forgetting that both England's internal and external strength "derives from the idea for which it exists."

So far I am in complete agreement with Mr. Byron. But he goes on to say not only that where England's civilisation is really at stake we must meet force with force, but also that in a time of crisis we must fight for England against the rising tide of tyranny and obscurantism, without asking ourselves if we are fighting for a country which really stands for freedom and truth . . . "a man at bay can no longer reason . . . he must fight."

The most difficult, and perhaps the only difficult, question the pacifist has to ask himself, and to answer, is . . . "What shall I do if all that I hold most valuable, even freedom and truth, is in danger of being overthrown by physical force?" Mr. Byron's answer is, "I must fight." The answer, as I see it, is not merely that the end does not justify the means, but that truth cannot be justified by false means. Freedom is the condition in which it is most possible to find truth, and we cannot reach that condition through falsehood. War, besides being economically unsound, is morally wrong, and it has been proved time and time again, from the Crusades to the Great War (to take a comparatively short span of time) that justice is obscured by war, that noble ends are obscured by viciousness. It is for the pacifist to find some way of meeting physical force other than in kind, and the quest must never be abandoned as an impossible one.

But Mr. Byron also says that we must fight when we find our backs against the wall, blindly, and "our wives and mothers will do the reasoning afterwards." He is reviving the spirit of the Great War, which he still regards as a war in which many noble men lost their lives in a noble cause. He should have left the Great War out, for it, if nothing else, ruins his argument. It was fought in the name of justice and of freedom. The settlement made after the war was a negation of justice, and the effects of the war were nearly disastrous to the English people. The majority of men who fought and died had only a very hazy idea why they were doing it. And those who survived, and their sons, have they anything for which to thank the war?

Mr. Byron pays a compliment to women's ability by leaving them the task of clearing up after the next war, but it would be more apt if he were to recognise women's right to speak, and work for peace now, if only because the next war will be no respecter of persons.

K. RUTH BLOWER

59 Clifton Hill, N.W.8.

A POSITIVE PEACE PROGRAMME

SIR,—It is a great thing that Mr. Keynes should have joined the ranks of those who want a new limited liability League within the old League of unlimited but dishonoured liabilities. But would not his plan be more realistic if it proposed rather more limitation and less liability, or at least a liability more evenly distributed? Is it conceivable that any major European State would pledge itself beforehand to accept majority decisions which might land it in war anywhere in Europe, irrespective of its geographical and military position and its own opinion as to whether unprovoked aggression had been committed? Mr. Keynes does not suggest imposing the liability even of economic sanctions on the minor States, who might thus (if I understand him rightly) help to vote their big brothers into a resistance to which they themselves contributed nothing.

May it not be necessary for the new League to be built up State by State, rather on the model of an Insurance Society offering different policies to suit different purses than of a church where a preacher lays down maxims of conduct which all accept but none observe? Suppose Great Britain, France and the U.S.S.R.—or the first two only if distrust of Russia is too profound to make her acceptable as an initiator—were to approach the other League States and take soundings as to their willingness to enter into the new League and on what terms. Would they in return for the League's protection be prepared to assist in the defence of other members—all members, or with any exceptions? Would they take part (*a*) in armed resistance; what kind and within what areas; (*b*) by allowing League troops to pass through their territory; (*c*) in economic sanctions; (*d*) in financial aid to the victims; (*e*) in supply of munitions; (*f*) by giving asylum to refugees; (*g*) by forbidding their nationals to visit the aggressor country as tourists; (*h*) by rupturing diplomatic relations? Another range of inquiry would concern the willingness of potential members to co-operate in Mr. Keynes's "new system of freedom in trade and intercourse"; yet another inquiry, their willingness to make concessions or accept arbitration for the removal of grievances over minority rights, frontiers, etc. The result might be to discover that most States wanted something for nothing, guarantees of their own security without risking anything for that of others. There might have to be hard bargaining, and some States might have to be allowed something for nothing, or for very little, in view of their own weakness yet strategical importance to the security of others.

Proposals of this kind no doubt have an unpleasant flavour to those who have been nourished on the lofty ideals of the old League. But that, if sweet-tasting, has proved an insubstantial form of nourishment. Listening last Thursday to Mr. Chamberlain and Sir John Simon, I thought what a pity it was that League advocates had played into the hands of those two sophists by expatiating so often on the difference between the League and "the old pre-war system of partial alliances." As first one and then the other unctuously rolled out that excuse for not making an effort to rally other States round ourselves and France as Mr. Churchill had suggested. One could just see them thinking, "That'll fetch the L.N.U. crowd!" But a half loaf of bread is better than a whole loaf of cardboard. If there had been in 1914 a "partial alliance" of sufficient strength and of known determination to stand together, there would have been no Great War. The States still in the League, as Mr. Keynes remarks, have sufficient strength, but are suffering from paralysis of the will. Whether or no they could still be rallied if leadership were offered them, cannot be known till it has been tried. Our Government is unwilling to make the attempt. But it has at least one useful quality—squeezability. Scarcely a sentence in the Prime Minister's speech but was so worded that it could be made to bear contrary interpretations, so as to fit in with a possible change of policy. That is why Berlin, Rome, Paris and Prague were each able to put on it the interpretation which—for diplomatic reasons—each wanted its public to believe. If the electorate sufficiently willed it, it might yet make the Government take the path towards a recreated League.

ELEANOR F. RATHBONE

House of Commons.

SIR,—Some two years ago I had the honour of crossing pens with Mr. Keynes in your columns. He then advocated "trust Mr. Baldwin" in foreign policy and expatiated on the advantages of ambiguity and drift. I advocated the policy of the International Peace Front, with France, Great Britain and the U.S.S.R. as the nucleus.

I am glad that the results of the policy Mr. Keynes advocated two years ago have at long last driven him into the camp of those who plead for an International Peace Front. I welcome our tardy but brilliant recruit. I only hope his conversion does not come too late to be of any use!

But there is a corollary to the policy of rebuilding the collective system on the lines Mr. Keynes now favours, to which he was no less strongly opposed two years ago than he was to the International Peace Front itself. I wonder whether Mr. Keynes has come round on that point too, or whether it will take another two years to do that?

The point is important, because what was a corollary two years ago has now become the primary and most urgent part of the policy of building an International Peace Front.

I should therefore be grateful if Mr. Keynes could enlighten us as to where he stands to-day on the issue I first ventured to raise in your columns two years ago, namely the question of imperial pacifism, as the necessary corollary to advocating an International Peace Front.

Does Mr. Keynes accept the Government's view that the single-handed defence of the whole Empire against all comers is an "absolute" duty, quite apart from circumstances or foreign policy? So long as the Left accept that view, they have no answer to the Tory charge that we are war-mongers. For in that case we are ready to fight for all the things the Government are preparing to fight for (including, as Mr. Chamberlain stated in the House on March 24th, not only the far-flung territories of the Empire, but also Portugal, Egypt and Iraq), plus standing by victims of aggression and rebuilding the collective system, which the Government regard as works of supererogation, gratuitous extras, luxuries in which they cannot indulge in these stern times.

Or does Mr. Keynes agree with what Labour and Liberal leaders have pointed out from time to time, namely that it is a physical impossibility for this country alone, however much we pile up armaments, to defend the whole Empire against all three Fascist Powers; that, as Mr. A. V. Alexander said, it would be "madness and suicide" to attempt it? If so, the case for the International Peace Front is that without it the Empire is militarily as well as morally indefensible. For to embark on a

suicidal war in the attempt to hang on to imperialist loot is surely a moral monstrosity as well as a political absurdity. Pooling imperial defence in the collective defence of a group of States accepting arbitration, economic co-operation and a square deal for colonial populations is surely a moral as well as a political and a military necessity.

If Mr. Keynes agrees with this view, which you, sir, have argued with great force, I hope he will say so. If he does not agree, I hope he will tell us where he stands on the issue of national unity behind our Tory Government, who have destroyed the League by collective system pacifism and who refuse to rebuild it, for single-handed war in defence of imperialism, Portugal, Iraq and Egypt.

"A SOCIALIST"

LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE

SIR,—I am convinced that before very long Labour will have to settle the question of participation in some form of national service, and I am equally convinced that Labour can only save itself and the nation and peace, by adopting a bold, courageous, and positive attitude towards an extremely dangerous situation.

Already in certain influential quarters there is talk of national service—the nasty word "conscription" is avoided—either for industry or for defence, or both. Convincing arguments are being adduced which go to show that if we are to carry out our programme in a specified period, Labour will have to be diluted in certain industries, and trade union standards broken down.

All kinds of inducements will be held out to the workers to fall in with these necessities of the moment, and easily awakened emotions of love of country, liberty and democracy will be played upon. During the last war "for democracy," the Defence of the Realm Act was passed, but this time it may be invoked in peace. Lord Beaverbrook, in an article in one of his newspapers, has already suggested its revival.

The great danger is that organised Labour through its leaders, whose patriotism has always been their strong point, will "fall" for this "man to man" appeal, and will agree to certain propositions without adequate guarantees. Then, having got the workers where they want them, what assurance is there that the National Government and its powerful supporters will not, bit by bit, filch away all their rights, including the right of free association?

Once having "mobilised" the nation on a national basis, there would be nothing to prevent the authorities from introducing a mild form of Fascism, and proceeding to make a deal with Hitler and Mussolini, even perhaps agreeing to become part of a Fascist bloc.

This is no pipe dream. Consciously, or sub-consciously if you like, influential sections of the upper classes in this country are sympathetically inclined towards Fascism. They may not admire the dictators individually, but instinctively they turn to them and their methods, when the masses demand amelioration of their conditions.

Now the problem that confronts Labour, and all democratic-thinking people, is, what can they do if invited by the National Government to help with rearmament in the interests of national self-preservation?

They cannot reject such a proposal out of hand without being charged with abandoning their country to the Fascist dictators. The rank and file of the movement would never agree to that. But neither can they accept it without reservations, without leaving the road open to Fascism in this country. Their acceptance will have to be implemented up to the hilt.

It will not be sufficient for a Labour man to be brought into the Cabinet, as Mr. Arthur Henderson was during the war. It will not do if Sir Walter Citrine and Mr. Bevin are co-opted as advisers to a Ministry of Munitions, and have their salaries doubled.

The situation demands a positive attitude, an almost uncompromising attitude by Labour. It cannot co-operate unless it is accepted on an equal footing. The leaders of the workers should remember that organised labour at this period is absolutely indispensable to the industrial life of the nation. Therefore, they are in an admirable position to make their own terms.

My ideal Labour leader, if he were approached by the Government would answer in this way:

"Yes," he would say, "we will co-operate with you both inside the Government and in the country, on our own conditions. We have trusted you before and you have let us down. The situation is much too grave now for us to take another chance. Besides, in your efforts to condone Fascist aggression in Spain, you have almost severed the strategic link connecting us with the Overseas Dominions and India. We, who have never been Imperialists, now feel called upon to act as custodians of the Empire. We shall do this, not from any motive of Imperialist exploitation, but because in the self-governing Dominions the workers and the common people there are as much opposed to Fascist domination as we are.

"Well, then, here are our terms:

"We will help in the speed-up of armaments for the resistance of the Fascist powers and of Fascism here, provided that in every factory and workshop engaged in the manufacture of materials essential to our defence we are allowed to place our representatives. They will be there, not only to look after the interests of the workers, but will also have access to the books of the company to see that standards of efficiency are observed, and to safeguard the community from profiteering. Our representatives will give an undertaking that defence will be a national effort in the true sense.

"If it is necessary to introduce national service to ensure adequate air defence for our civilian population, or to strengthen the armed forces, we shall co-operate on the same conditions—that our selected representatives shall be appointed to each group or battalion. Our men will be the watch dogs of the people against domination by a privileged military class. They will also help to educate the people in the necessity for these measures to protect their lives and liberties. Above all things they will look out for and report any attempt to impose Fascism from above.

"These terms may appear to you to be extremely drastic, but they are dictated by the exigencies of a desperate situation. To us, Fascism, as represented by terror, concentration camps, and bombs raining down on defenceless towns, must be regarded as a pestilence—a horrible plague which, if we do not erect a sanitary cordon against it, will assuredly overwhelm us. You have failed to stem its progress; instead, by your dilatoriness, you have encouraged its advance. Now that you realise that you have blundered, you want us to help you.

"But gentlemen, you cannot have it both ways. Candidly, we do not trust you, but the situation is now so desperate that largely from motives of self-interest we will help you, but only on the above conditions. They are there for you to accept or reject. If you accept, we shall co-operate wholeheartedly, but if you then attempt to sell us out we shall not only denounce you, but deprive you of power.

"If you reject these terms, we shall refuse to have anything to do with you. The onus will then be on you, to carry on without our assistance, and in the face of our determined opposition."

3 Lawn Road, N.W.3. F. L. MCILRAITH

OXFORD ELECTRIC

SIR,—A letter in your issue of March 26th concerning the transfer of the Oxford Electric Co. to the Wessex Co. purports to give relevant facts in connection with it. I need hardly remind your readers that Lord Meston, who signed the letter, was chairman of both the Oxford Co. and the Wessex Co.

The inference under para. (1) is that the consumers in Oxford City and the surrounding area must submit to the dictates of Edmundsons Electric Co. under the Wessex Bill of 1927, under which they claim this area in spite of the fact that under the 1924 Special Order the Oxford Corporation has the right to purchase the Oxford Electric Co. in 1966.

The facts as stated in paragraphs (3) and (4) are misleading. Lord Meston states that the Wessex Company's offer of £240,000 was more favourable to the shareholders than the Corporation's offer of £300,000. He and his fellow directors (one of whom is an Alderman of the City of Oxford) circulated this information to the shareholders on January 20th. The Corporation immediately sent them a letter correcting their misunderstanding, on receipt of which they sent a letter to their shareholders, dated January 24th, 1938, in which they say: "Your Directors have received a letter from the Town Clerk of the Corporation of Oxford purporting to explain and clarify the offer of £300,000 made by the Corporation for the purchase of the Undertaking of your Company. The offer of the Corporation as so explained is more favourable than the offer of the Wessex Electric Company.

"Edmundsons Electricity Corporation Ltd. who are the owners of the majority of the Ordinary Shares of your Company, also own a controlling interest in the Wessex Electricity Company, and it is their wish that the Undertaking of your Company should be sold to the Wessex Electricity Company.

"To enable this to be done without loss to the Ordinary Shareholders of your Company Edmundsons Electricity Corporation

Ltd. have undertaken that if your Company is sold to the Wessex Electricity Company each Ordinary Shareholder in your Company shall, on the liquidation of your Company, receive sixpence per share more than he would have received had the offer of the Oxford Corporation been accepted."

It was therefore a foregone conclusion that at the Shareholders' Meeting of January 28th, 1938, Edmundsons controlled the situation. Nevertheless, of the Shareholders present and voting by hand, 19 voted in favour of selling to the Wessex and 27 against.

In paragraph (5) Lord Meston says: "The Oxford Company has treated its consumers well." The residents, however, in that area are unanimous in a desire to be supplied by the Oxford Corporation. The explanation is apparent when prices are compared. A small house with four rooms and a consumption of 1,000 units per annum would pay as follows:

Under the Wessex Electric Co.	..	£6 10 0
Under the Oxford Electric Co.	..	£4 17 6
Under the Oxford Corporation	..	£2 18 9

It is apparent that the wish of the consumers and of the public as expressed through the unanimous vote of the Oxford City Council has been ignored and overridden by a large financial group of companies.

A monopoly like electricity should be under public control. Public authorities can usually borrow money for capital purposes more cheaply than companies. In 1935–36 local authorities paid only 28.10 per cent. of their gross surplus in interest, while companies paid 57.66 per cent. It is therefore not surprising that the average price per unit under local authorities was 1.73*d.*, while under companies it was 2.40*d.*

HENRY T. GILLETT
(Chairman of the Oxford Electricity Committee.)

111 Banbury Road, Oxford.

TRIAL OF A JUDGE

SIR,—In his generous review of Mr. Stephen Spender's play, *Trial of a Judge*, Mr. Desmond MacCarthy is mistaken in implying that it was a Unity Theatre production. It was produced by Rupert Doone, with scenery designed and painted by John Piper, with a cast of well-known actors, for the Group Theatre (for which it was expressly written), at the Unity Theatre in Goldington Street.

During the past six years the Group Theatre has been largely responsible, through its production of plays by T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood, Louis MacNeice and this one by Stephen Spender, for the recent revival of interest in poetic drama. Its aims are to present plays through the active collaboration of a group of actors, artists, writers, musicians and producers, who are interested in subjects from contemporary life, having a greater significance than the usual subjects shown on the commercial stage. Such a collaboration is achieved only in the theatre itself, and is surely an important objective, which can only be criticised in its entirety.

It is necessary to point this out since Mr. MacCarthy, in his most favourable article on our production omits to mention the name of the Group Theatre.

RUPERT DOONE — BRIAN EASDALE
STEPHEN SPENDER — ROBERT MEDLEY
BENJAMIN BRITTEN — JOHN PIPER
Directors of the Group Theatre.

Group Theatre Rooms,
9 Great Newport Street, London, W.C.2.

TO BEG I AM ASHAMED

SIR,—On March 24th copies of a book entitled *To Beg I Am Ashamed* by Sheila Cousins were sent by us for review to the press. In the printed note accompanying each review copy, the date of publication of the book was clearly stated—April 4th. It has for long been established as between publishers and press that books sent for review shall not be "noticed" in the press before the stated date of publication—a practice that has been developed to ensure fair treatment and equal opportunity to every newspaper. A copy of *To Beg I Am Ashamed* was sent with the date of publication marked in the usual way to the Editor of the *Daily Mail;* yet six days before publication the *Daily Mail* broke through the custom and courtesy of the publishing trade, and launched a violent attack on the book.

We are not concerned at the moment with either the moral attitude or the literary judgment of the *Daily Mail*, but we do wish to call attention to this breach of custom, courtesy and fair dealing by the *Daily Mail's* Editor.

A serious position will arise for press and publishers if, following the precedent of the *Daily Mail*, newspaper editors consider themselves at liberty, if they think fit, to override the established custom and attack, praise, or otherwise publicise books sent to them for review, before the date of publication of these books. It will probably not be difficult for a newspaper editor to convince himself that there is some peculiar pretext of urgency to justify him in breaking in future a long-established custom of fair dealing. We hope, however, that in calling attention to this action of the *Daily Mail*, and pointing to its dangers, we may help to prevent the chaos which might result from repetitions of such action.

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Miscellany

THREE CITIES

CROSSING the border, the first city I came to
Was white with death.
No orders harsh, no living voices rude,
Jarred the equality and quietude
Of citizens with feet to the sunset lying.

Crossing the border, the next city I came to
Was grey with sleep.
I heard men breathe, I heard a watchman shout,
I heard a soul in frenzy of dream cry out,
And citizens in rooms unquiet stirring.

Crossing the border, the third city I came to
Was red with life.
They worked, they fed, they lived, in equal shares,
They marched in line, they wheeled, they formed in squares,
The citizens for war to the death preparing.

G. ROSTREVOR HAMILTON

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A BRIDEGROOM

A FEW days ago Egor Bassof got married at last. He had taken for a wife a hefty wench, a moon-face, about 13 stone in weight. A piece of good luck!

Egor Bassof had been a widower for three years—no one would marry him, though he asked every other woman he came across, even the lame soldier's widow from the village of Mestechko. The affair fell through, though, because of a mere trifle.

Egor Bassof loved talking about that proposal business. He lied like sin, giving new and amazing details every time he told the story.

All the peasants knew his story by heart, but would persuade him on every possible occasion to tell it over and over again, choking with laughter even before he began.

"Now then, Egor, how was it that you came to propose to her?" they would ask him, winking at each other.

"Well, it's like this," he would answer: "There's no denying, I've made a fool of mesself."

"Too much in a hurry, eh? Weren't you, Egor?"

"That I was," admitted Bassof: "You know yourselves—harvest season! You're up to your neck in work: you've got to mow, you've got to cart, you've got to stack. And that was the time, boys, that my woman chose to die. To-day she's sick, to-morrow she's worse. She tosses and wanders, and all but topples off the stove. . . .

"Thank you, Katerina Ivanovna," I says to her: "I see you set yourself out to ruin me. Is it a proper time for you to die? Couldn't you stick it till next autumn? I wouldn't mind so much then."

But she just waved me aside. 'Course, I called in a doctor: it cost me a bushel of oats. The doctor poured the oats into his sack, then said:

"Medical Science is powerless to undertake anything in your wife's case. There's no doubt about it, she's going to die."

"What sickness is she dying of, sir, if I may be allowed to ask?" says I.

"That is not known to Medical Science either," says he.

However, he gave her some powders, and was off. We put the powders behind the ikons—no use! My woman screams and tosses, and all but topples off the stove. And she dies at nightfall.

'Course, I couldn't help howling. Harvest time's busy time: you've got to mow, you've got to cart, you've got to stack! How's that to be done without a woman to help you? What is a man to do? Get married again? Some lass would consent p'rhaps, but they don't like marrying in a hurry. Sort of ashamed! And I was in a deuce of a hurry! . . .

Well, I harnessed the nag, put my new trousers on, washed my feet and drove off. I get to Mestechko, I leaves the nag with a friend, and I walks from house to house asking folks for advice.

"My hands are full," I says: "There isn't time to waste on talking. Do you know of any lass, no matter how poor, who wouldn't mind getting married? Looks don't matter: I'm all for marriage."

"'Course there is one or two," they say: "but times are busy, no one cares for marriage. Try Anisia, the soldier's widow, maybe she wouldn't mind. . . ."

And there I went.

I comes to the cottage, I walks in, and I looks round. I sees a woman seated on a box, scratching her leg.

"Good evening," I says: "Stop scratching your leg, I've got business to talk of."

"Talk away," she says: "Never mind my scratching, it's not your concern!"

"Well," says I: "my hands are full, I've no time for haggling. You and I make two, no third person wanted. Let's get spliced," I says, "and start binding sheaves to-morrow."

"That may be done," says she: "if you're interested in me."

I looks at her—nothing wrong with the lass, broad and beamy and looks as if she could work.

"Yes," says I: "'course, I'm interested. But tell me the truth, how old are you?"

"Not so old as I looks," says she: "To tell you the truth I've not calculated my age. But the year of my birth, if I remember right, is one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six."

"Well," says I: "times are busy, I can't stop to calculate your age. It's all right if you aren't lying."

"No," says she: "I tell no lies, God punishes for lying. Shall I get my things ready?"

"Why not?" I says: "Get them ready. Have you much luggage to take with you?"

"Not so much," says she: "A box and a feather-bed."

So we took the box and the feather-bed, and stowed it in the cart. I grabbed a cooking-pot and a couple of billets of wood, thinking they might come in useful. We started.

I drives my nag, I hurries along, and my woman's jolting on her box and talking of her plans, how she'll live, and what she'll cook, and that it won't be bad to wash herself in a bath-house as she had had no bath for three years.

At last we got home.

"Get off," says I.

The woman gets off, but in a queer sort of way, sideways, and if she were lame in both feet. "Something's wrong," thinks I.

"What's the matter?" says I.

"Nothing's the matter," says she: "I'm having a bit of a joke, that's all."

"Now then, that won't do. It's no joke if you're lame! I've no use for a lame woman in my household."

"Nothing serious," says she: "it's only my left leg. It's just half-an-inch shorter than the right."

"Half-an-inch or an inch makes no difference," says I:

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"I'm up to my neck in work, I can't stop to measure. That doesn't suit me at all. Why, you'll spill water when you carry it! Beg pardon, my lass, I've made a fool of mesself."

"That's not my concern," she says: "you've got to marry me."

"That I won't," says I: "it can't be done. Everything suits me: your face and your age—year of birth one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six. But I can't marry you. Beg pardon, I didn't notice your leg in time. . . ."

Then my woman began screaming and cursing me, wanted to fight me, too. In the meantime I carried her things out into the yard.

There and then she hit me across the mug, once or twice, I don't remember, after which she says:

"You're damned lucky to have noticed it. Take me back home. Now then, move along!"

We got into the cart and drove off. About six miles from her home, all of a sudden I lost my temper. Here I was, up to my neck in work, no time for such nonsense as taking brides home!

So, without saying a word, I threw her traps off the cart, and stopped to see what she'd do. The wench couldn't stick it and jumped after her things. I turned the nag round and—into the wood!

And that was the end of it.

How she got home with her box and her feather-bed I don't know. But she did get there. A year later she got married.

And now she is a mother. MICHAEL ZOSHCHENKO

(Translated by ELISAVETA FEN)

THE MOVIES

"I'll Take Romance," at the Regal.
"Boy of the Streets," lately at the Plaza.
"The First Hundred Years," lately at the Empire.

LORD TYRRELL'S wireless talk on the censorship last week was so extravagantly dull that it began to seem as though there must be some point in it: "such dullness, Madam, is not in nature." Did the President of the Board of Censors hope that we should all have switched off before Mr. Herbert Hodge began to put his questions? Mr. Hodge is a London taxi-driver who has made a name in broadcasting as an exponent of the point of view of the man in the street; if the man in the street is as sensible and intelligent as Mr. Hodge, then England is better off than we had supposed. In several of these cinema talks which I have heard his interpellations have been excellently to the point. He clears his throat in a good-humoured fashion, and asks just those questions we all want to ask; but he does not always get a straightforward answer, and then either his natural good humour or B.B.C. caution prevents him from pressing his point home. This, though convenient for the speaker, is exasperating for the listener. Mr. Hitchcock, for example, was obviously embarrassed by Mr. Hodge's suggestion that many films are not exactly produced at all but "emerge more or less out of chaos"; but anyone with the smallest experience of the film world knows how often that phrase represents the truth. Mr. Andrew Rice was, I thought, similarly evasive when asked by Mr. Hodge why there are so many pointless changes in the plot when a book is turned into a movie, and whether the mammoth scale of expenditure is really necessary or justified, at any rate in the English cinema to-day. An exhibitor whose name I have forgotten, when asked why the best of recent films were not more often revived, needlessly assumed in his reply that there was nothing between a policy of "revivals only" and the commonsense plan of reviving outstanding films when the new ones are below standard. To Mr. Hodge's questions about the method of selection of his Board of Censors, Lord Tyrrell returned a vague answer: they must be grown-up, healthy, educated, and so on. Then Mr. Hodge raised the very point I wanted to raise myself:

Hodge: In conversation with previous speakers in the series, I asked why we didn't see more British films with stories based on modern social problems. And I gathered from their replies—rightly or wrongly—that they thought you'd disapprove of such themes.

Lord Tyrrell: I think it must have been evident from my previous remarks that the Board can only consider the films and scenarios which are submitted by the publishers. It has no say whatsoever as to what shall or shall not be produced in the studios; in fact, it would be an impertinence even to attempt to do so, and naturally I cannot be asked to talk about hypothetical problems.

Evasion's masterpiece! We are left in the old state of uncertainty whether producer or censor is to blame for the flaccid unreality of the English film. Producers principally, no doubt; but Lord Tyrrell might have seized the opportunity to correct the impression made by his speech to film exhibitors in June, 1936, when he expressed his pleasure that England was free from films dealing with "current, burning political questions," and deplored the "thin end of the wedge" which might soon make "some check" necessary. His principle is not only "no controversy," but "no controversy about the no controversy principle," and so his wireless talk remained as dead as the average British film itself. To-day public men are no longer expected to expound their policy and maintain it against reasonable criticism; the universal cry is "for heaven's sake leave the question in a decent obscurity," and dull dogs begin to find their dullness no liability, but an asset.

I'll Take Romance is first-rate entertainment for the opera-lover, but rather mild fun for the rest of the world. It is clearly Grace Moore, not Deanna Durbin, who is mad about music. We have been spared another rise-to-fame story, and Miss Moore is already the Metropolitan's darling at the outset. That leaves plenty of space for charming and admirably recorded performances of (1) the Gavotte from *Manon*, (2) the Brindisi from *Traviata*, (3) a slice from *Marta* which I didn't recognise, and (4) the whole of the love duet from *Madame Butterfly*. For the rest, the obvious situations and dialogue are considerably enlivened by Stuart Erwin as

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Stephen King-Hall.

the strangest assistant an impresario ever had, and Helen Westley as a dilapidated old dragon of *bel canto*.

The Friday-to-Thursday programmes at the Plaza and the Empire are the despair of the weekly reviewer. *Boy of the Streets* is an attack on slum conditions less brilliantly and more sentimentally handled than *Dead End*, but worth seeing for the clever acting of Jackie Cooper. *The First Hundred Years* is an attractive and quite un-crazy comedy about husband and wife (Robert Montgomery and Virginia Bruce) separated by the demands of their several jobs and reunited by Mother Nature. It is smooth and very agreeable: no one need mind about missing it, but most people will enjoy it if it comes their way.

PETER GALWAY

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Idiot's Delight," at the Apollo.

Idiot's Delight is a brisk and nerve-racking Robert Sherwood comedy, that ends with a black-out, modified bomb noises and two lovers singing "Onward Christian Soldiers" at a hotel piano. The time is the outbreak of the next war, the scene, a *de luxe* hotel for winter sports on a Central European mountainside. Few guests are there for pleasure, except the honeymooners; a dozen or so are stranded—notably, the professor travelling with twenty-eight rats, and the weary impresario travelling with six blondes. There is a French Communist, whose heroic hysteria gets him a grim fate, Achille Weber, of the Comité des Forges, and his Russian mistress, Irene, who only towards the end relaxes her performance as the Beautiful Spy. One could not have a better place than a *de luxe* hotel to watch the decomposition that would precede war—the same thing might be watched in the Louis Seize cocktail bar of a rapidly sinking liner. The lights are to be cut off; the waiter is mobilised; an insistent silence, like that of a stopped clock, grips the hotel lounge, in which everything is paralysed. The hotel is not happily situated for war conditions: it is next door to a military aerodrome. Vita-glass, chromium and coloured leather continue to offer to fate their pathetic resistance: soon searchlights run over the dark sky. Frontier officers clatter in and out, remove the Communist and detain Irene.

This is hardly an evening for those who would not meet a looming trouble half way. For those who could date themselves back to the safety of, say, 1920, it should make a pretty *tour de force*. It is worth while to forget its unpleasant topicality, to enjoy Mr. Raymond Massey, who plays the impresario, tap-dancing with the blondes, and to watch him punch right through the top of a boater hat. He is excellent: as despondently magnetic as ever. He also produced the play—what a lot of things he can do. Miss Tamara Geva, as Irene, made effective use of her figure and personality, once she emerged from the Beautiful Spy convention. Mr. Franklin Dyall did well as the bitter professor, and the troupe of blondes put in good team-work: they were as dumb as anybody could wish. The play contained discussions which, though pointed and apposite, do not stay in the mind: they must have been important; no doubt they were important, but Mr. Sherwood, by the furious pace of the entertainment, by the anti-climaxes, by the too effective use of the sentimental element, has defeated his own serious ends. This is too successful a play to be a successful tract. The tension, the threat, the sense of futility loom large at the moment, but are forgotten: one remembers the wisecracks, the actors' personal charm. The theatre, for what must have been diverse reasons, was packed: there was not an empty seat.

Varda and Ivy Langton at the Storran Gallery

Varda is a Greek, a descendant of those anonymous artists who made gorgeous the churches and palaces of Byzantium, Ravenna and Salonika. He has a very fine sense of colour, and an extraordinary feeling for the materials in which he works. His mosaics, in which he uses plaster, paint, looking-glass and even paper, make profoundly satisfactory decorations. They look as if they might be difficult to place in a house, but in fact they have a surprising ability to fit in with other works of art. And you do not tire of them. His most recent panels, now showing in Albany Courtyard, are the best he has made. We should like to see a whole room decorated by him—the effect even of a dozen of his panels hung round the walls of a gallery is enchanting. The comic titles that Varda gives to his works may delude ingenuous visitors into supposing that he is not a serious artist. But in fact his work is subtle as well as ingenious, intellectual as well as ornamental. There is at present a natural reaction towards realism, which will no doubt prove, like cubism, to be a salutary discipline. But there is nothing fundamentally more excellent in realism than in unrealism. Are the mosaics of Ravenna inferior to the genre-pictures of Amsterdam?

Miss Ivy Langton paints in the "self-taught," "Sunday" or "Primitive" style. She has a gift for using pigment, and her works, especially 1 and 2, are agreeable without being remarkable.

Artists Who Died Young and Henry Lamb at the Leicester Galleries

Cedric Morris at Guggenheim Jeune

It is always a pleasure to see pictures of different schools hanging side by side; and the Leicester Galleries have found a good excuse for such an exhibition in "Artists Who Died Young." One wishes they had been able to include paintings by Masaccio, Giorgione and Raphael. The show is limited to artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There are five pictures by Van Gogh, including two very interesting landscapes in a transitional style, and an exuberantly rich painting of some chesnut-trees. There are some fine Géricaults that we are specially glad to see, for this artist is rarely represented in England. The Gritins and Boningtons are not the most exciting of their sort, but there are good examples of Seurat, Modigliani, Spencer Gore, Innes, and Juan Gris. Roger de la Fresnaye is another painter inadequately known in England—the pictures by him in this exhibition are impressively good. Two paintings by John Currie, who died in 1914 aged about 28, are not very important in themselves, but leave one speculating vainly about his possibilities. Unlike writers, painters usually become better and better, the older they grow. This exhibition is therefore tragic as well as interesting.

Mr. Henry Lamb's paintings are obviously those of an unusually intelligent man. His colour is rather monotonous and very individual—so much so that we find it difficult to enjoy his pictures. But he has a gift, almost unsurpassed among living English painters, of producing a "speaking likeness." Perhaps the portraits do not "speak" in quite such charming accents as their originals, but they certainly are not, in any sense of the word, dumb.

Most of Mr. Cedric Morris's portraits emphasise the particularity or *differentia* of the sitter to such an extent that they are caricatures. There are very pleasant passages of paint, as anyone who has seen Mr. Morris's landscapes would expect. But the general impression is of an exaggeration unjustified by the aesthetic result. These likenesses do not speak so much as caterwaul. The most felicitous portraits are those of elderly ladies, like Mrs. Gorer, or of young men like Mr. Loraine Conran.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, April 2nd—
- Youth Conference for Action, organised by L. N. U. Youth Groups, Transport House, 2.30.

SUNDAY, April 3rd—
- J. P. Gilmour on "The Ethical Merits and Demerits of the English Novel," Conway Hall, 11. Chamber Music Concert, 6.30.
- Film Society Performance: "Son of Mongolia," New Gallery Kinema, 2.30.

TUESDAY, April 5th—
- Mrs. Grace Lankester on "India Revisited," Friends House, 1.20.
- P. A. Sloan on "Moscow," Morley College, 8.
- "Power and Glory," Savoy.

WEDNESDAY, April 6th—
- Civil Liberties Lunch, Comedy Restaurant, Panton Street, 12.45. Miss Koo Chu Chen will speak. Tickets 3*s*. 6*d*., non-members, 4*s*.
- "Ghost for Sale," Whitehall.

THURSDAY, April 7th—
- N.U.S. Congress, 1938. Subject: "Challenge to the University," Nottingham. Till April 13th. Particulars from 3 Endsleigh Street, W.C.1.
- Joint Protest Meeting of Progressive Organisations in Hampstead against National Government's Foreign Policy. Speakers include Eleanor Rathbone, Victor Gollancz, J. F. Horrabin. Hampstead Town Hall, 8.
- T. P. Conwell Evans on "Germany as I See It," Bethnal Green Public Library, 8.30.
- Royal Philharmonic Society Concert, Queens Hall, 8.15.

FRIDAY, April 8th—
- A. Fenner Brockway on "Socialism," Essex Hall, 8.15.

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

EVERY day we are reminded that hate breeds hate, and that cruelty and injustice generate an indignation which makes one wish to turn the tables relentlessly on those whose boast is bullying and persecution. How easy to find one's emotions written down in the Old Testament—and how extremely silly to let oneself be blinded and enraged. For if hate breeds hate, reasonableness breeds reasonableness in man. Therefore, instead of finding a savage enjoyment in Jeremiah's howlings about Babylon, and a consolation in Job, one will do better to fortify one's spirit with David Hume, and try some chapters of that book which, as the author said, "fell dead born from the press." *A Treatise On Human Nature, being an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects.* Mr. Aldous Huxley pleaded recently for detachment, and Lytton Strachey at the beginning of an essay on Hume suggested that it was "the most characteristic virtue of humanity —the antithesis to the bestial"—and that Hume possessed it in the highest degree. Yet a little pamphlet which has just been reprinted in type facsimile, called *An Abstract of A Treatise of Human Nature*, 1740, with an introduction by J. M. Keynes and P. Sraffa (Cambridge, 3*s.* 6*d.*), shows that Hume was not always quite as detached as perhaps he felt afterwards that a philosopher should have been. At the age of twenty-three, Hume decided that he would dislike commerce as much as he had already disliked law, and went abroad to live in France with the utmost frugality on his very slender resources. In three years' solitude he composed *A Treatise on Human Nature* and returned to get it published. The first two volumes appeared in January, 1739, but were not reviewed until the following November. The intervening months were a test of the philosophical detachment of a young man who was aware that he had written a work of genius. It has fallen to Messrs. Keynes and Sraffa to unravel how he fell short.

* * *

In doing so they finally demolish an agreeable legend which was concocted by a series of Victorian biographers, each adding a little to the story of his predecessor and getting a little farther away from the truth, in a most instructive manner. Hume wrote a letter on March, 1740, to his friend Francis Hutcheson, saying, "I have sent Mr. Smith a copy of my book. I have not yet heard what he has done with the Abstract." John Hill Burton, Hume's biographer, printed the letter and surmised that Mr. Smith was Adam Smith, then a student in the University of Glasgow, not quite seventeen years old. John Rae, Adam Smith's biographer, carried this farther by surmising that Adam Smith had made an abstract of Hume's Treatise shortly after its publication, at the age of sixteen. Leslie Stephen repeated the story and Professor W. R. Scott, in a book on Francis Hutcheson, added convincing details about the abstracts Hutcheson required his students to make. It is a pretty story bringing Hume and Adam Smith together ten years before they met, but unfortunately there was another Mr. Smith. Messrs. Keynes and Sraffa point out that Hutcheson's cousin Bruce was in partnership with a Dublin bookseller called Jack Smith and they published Hutcheson's works. It appears that Hume, who despaired of the English edition, wanted to get a second edition published in order to incorporate new material where he felt his argument had been at fault. There was no copyright law between England and Ireland, and he could get an Irish bookseller to bring out the book without breaking his agreement with his English publisher, with whom he was already on bad terms. Though this plan fell through, and his amendments had to be incorporated in an appendix to a third volume published in 1740, Smith published a Dublin Edition of Hume's History of England. When a copy of the Abstract passed into the possession of Mr. Keynes it at once became apparent that it was the work, not of any Smith, but of Hume himself, trying desperately to draw attention to his own book in an anonymous puff. And the puff fell flatter than the book.

> Apart from considerations of style, the contents could not have been contributed by anyone but Hume himself, since they involve an anticipation of Hume's additions to the *Treatise* which were not published until subsequently.

The editors of this reprint thereupon compare the *Abstract* with these additions in the Appendix. The most important of these revisions is that in which Hume declares that belief is not a voluntary act. In the *Abstract* he writes:

> Since therefore belief implies a conception, and yet is something more; and since it adds no new idea to the conception; it follows that it is a different MANNER of conceiving an object; something that is distinguishable to the feeling, and depends not upon our will, as all our ideas do.

In the *Appendix* he expressed the same view (which seems to me to be of absolutely fundamental importance) even more clearly:

> The mind has the command over all its ideas, and can separate, unite, mix, and vary them, as it pleases; so that if belief consisted merely in a new idea, annex'd to the conception, it would be in a man's power to believe what he pleas'd. We may therefore, conclude, that belief consists merely in a certain feeling or sentiment; in something, that depends not on the will, but must arise from certain determinate causes and principles, of which we are not masters.

* * *

This was a correction of his previous statement in *The Treatise* that belief is nothing but *a more vivid and intense conception of any idea*, which follows a charming argument that people do not really believe all that they imagine they do. He pointed out that the more sensible Roman Catholics condemn the massacre of St. Bartholomew as barbarous, though it was executed against people condemned to eternal and infinite punishments. Hence we may conclude that they have no solid belief in what they affirm about the next world. In matters of religion, he added, men love to be terrified by a gloomy preacher, and that in religious discourses and dramatic performances fear and terror give pleasure—"the passion being softened by want of belief in the subject, has no more than the agreeable effect of enlivening the mind."

* * *

It is to be hoped that the discovery and reprinting of this little pamphlet will not be regarded not only as literary and bibliographical curiosity, but that it will be read, for it is most admirably and attractively written, and now, nearly two hundred years late, it may serve its author's purpose by sending readers to his greatest work. One finds in *The Treatise on Human Nature* less of what the untrained reader cannot help but regard as the verbal tangles of philosophers and very many delightful pages such as those in which he affirms a belief in the reasoning powers of animals, and those in which he gives a thoroughly rational explanation of modesty and chastity in women. How one wishes that reason provided the last word! Yet the pleasure to be found in reading Hume is that for him it is the only guide. Though the *Treatise on Human Nature* never brought Hume any fame during his lifetime, his essays, largely founded on the ideas in it, made him a celebrity, and when, in 1763, he accepted an invitation to become the secretary of the Embassy in Paris, he received one of the most remarkable welcomes that has ever been accorded a philosopher. Reason was in fashion just then, and Parisian Society fell upon Hume's neck.

> Those who have not seen the strange effects of modes will never imagine the strange reception I met with at Paris, from men and women of all ranks and stations. The more I recoiled from their excessive civilities, the more I was loaded with them.

Hume did, however, as he admits, very much enjoy the society of the young. His scepticism, as he also says, was a help, when he thought of how he and everyone else were environed with the deepest darkness.

> Most fortunately it happens, that since reason is incapable of dispelling these clouds, nature herself suffices to that purpose. . . . I dine, I play a game of backgammon, I converse, and am merry with my friends; . . . I may, nay, I must yield to the current of nature, in submitting to my senses and understanding; and in this blind submission I show most perfectly my sceptical disposition and principles.

DAVID GARNETT

The sixty-first minute

Some weeks ago a temporary indisposition kept us indoors for a day or two. A Goss advertisement was due to appear the next week in *The New Statesman*. Here was the opportunity to put some really deep thought behind our two or three hundred words.

So in the morning we sat down, pen and paper within reach, and having exercised our minds with the morning newspapers, we felt ready to deliver an exhortation that would make every male reader of this paper feel very sensitive about his wardrobe, unless, of course, he happened to have visited Newgate Street recently.

But even our slight experience has been enough to prove that inspiration does not come to order. We were stuck. After several abortive attempts we gave it up, and here we are scribbling our monthly message, as usual, at the sixty-first minute of the twelfth hour.

We mean the sixty-first minute, for everybody who has anything to do with papers knows that the last minute before going to press is generally the minute after the time officially stated. And that gives us our cue for this advertisement.

Time after time, desperate customers have telephoned to demand a morning suit, tails, a tropical outfit, a heavy-weight overcoat—some garment or other that they simply must have " also sooner than possible."

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MR. FORSTER

The Writings of E. M. Forster. By ROSE MACAULAY. *Hogarth Press.* 7s. 6d.

"Let us suppose that of the hundred thousand people living in this town . . there are only three of your sort. It goes without saying that you cannot conquer the mass of darkness round you; little by little, as you go on living, you will be lost in the crowd. You will have to give in to it. Life will get the better of you, but still you will not disappear without a trace. After you there may appear perhaps six like you, then twelve and so on until you form a majority. In two or three hundred years life will be unimaginably beautiful, marvellous. Man needs such a life . . ." exclaims Vershinin, in *The Three Sisters*, to Masha, who takes off her hat and decides to stay for lunch. This is optimism, liberal optimism, with a delay-action of several hundred years. *The Three Sisters* was written when, though they did not know it, the tide of civilisation was full in: since then, the tide has turned and is steadily going out. Chehov did not live to see the present complete set-back. Mr. E. M. Forster's place, not in time but in feeling, is still at that recent high-water mark. He is the civilised man who had got to watch a decline. He has Chehov's perception of "the mass of darkness," of its encroaching power; he is aware of darkness chiefly as opposition, opposition to the possible light. This fixed belief in light, light somewhere, gives him a fixed position: he belongs to an order rather than to a time.

Time has not been a great factor in Mr. Forster's development. Few artists attain to his stature without some dynamic change in their point of view. Their susceptibility not widening with their expressive power, they must reject as much as they take in. Trial and error in the man himself lasts longer than trial and error in the artist, who may have come to early perfection while the man himself is still unresolved. With some artists the attempt at self-discovery *is*, itself, the art. But Mr. Forster, though his first novels were published when he was in the 'twenties, seems to have been adult when he began to write. Then he took up without hesitation, in fact with evident certainty, the position with regard to life that he has occupied since. Nothing has budged him from it. It took no term of years to show what would be inevitable. He may have had the power to anticipate experience; for though experience must have deepened, it has not altered him. At all events, he went with that first book direct to his personal maturity—and in an artist that is more than a private matter. The thirty-three years since *Where Angels Fear to Tread* have given him further data, but have not changed his conclusions. In those years his scope and power have widened naturally: the novels describe enlarging circles round a fixed, and essential, centre point. His "development" has been a matter of equipping himself more fully, and with wider and wider reference, to express what he has from the first felt. His susceptibility, in those two early novels so near together in time, was a young susceptibility, in its depth and painfulness—in that sense, it is a young susceptibility still. His visual detachment from the scenes in his mind was from the first, and is, perfect: his emotional detachment is incomplete.

Intellect gives the five novels their structure and edits feeling—the novels' source is emotion, and their matter is purely emotional. The fine mind is needed to translate his intuitions, whose directness makes them foreign and unfamiliar on the pages of novels. For some rather muddled reason he has been called a high-brow by people who find the term suspicious: in fact, he is not abstruse; he does not write from an altitude; his novels are as concrete as Jane Austen's. What is intimidating? Possibly the absence of *idées reçues*—especially *idées reçues* on the subject of sex—possibly the unambiguousness, possibly the fact that, though he deals in feeling, like the popular novelists, and with the relations between people, the feeling is stamped with a particular quality, the relations are disabusedly examined. What gives his feeling, or his characters' feelings, that particular quality? A sort of frightening control: the control of someone who says nothing when he has just witnessed an accident, who not only does not give way but smiles and talks about something else. The novels, even the almost unbearable *Longest Journey*, do all smile, and their smile is genuine. Taken down from the shelf and opened at random, few novels could be more inviting than any of these five—the dialogue, the set-out, the quick-moving, equable passages, the delightful *contretemps*, the absence of a single clot or turgidity at once invite one to diversion and pleasure. Here is sheer *story*: one cannot fail to read on. All the same, through all this runs vehemence, like the power-charged wire through the pretty coloured cord of the flex. . . . The politeness (in the great sense) of Mr. Forster's writing alienates from him violently minded people, who feel he does not make enough fuss.

In fact, Mr. Forster's voice is pitched on that one note that goes on being heard under an uproar. He is not rhetorical; he is not a "prophetic" writer (in his own sense in *Aspects of the Novel*). His position has always been, austerely, a personal position: there is therefore no question of his becoming isolated. Though still read by a minority, he was not intended to be a minority writer: the majority for him does not yet exist. He has been mistaken for an over-moderate man. He is not a moderate man; he is one kind of fanatic—the fanatic inside his own control. He is a leading menace to the forts of folly—his art does not merely tilt at things, it undermines them surely. He uses an irony which is seldom gentle, and is in the long run deadly to what it attacks—for instance, the Wilcoxes. His ruthlessness of expression is checked only by his austere style. No, no one could call him moderate: a fairer charge against him is the charge of unfairness—brought up by his treatment of half his cast in *A Passage to India*. This novel, because of its popular-controversial subject, drew the attention of a public for whom the earlier novels remained sealed—in fact, of a public whose perplexity or inattention had let them go out of print. *A Passage to India* started with one advantage: it was clear to everyone what it was *about*. No doubt the Anglo-Indians did not get a perfectly fair deal—no more, for the matter of that, did the Wilcoxes, Agnes, Cecil Vyse or Mrs. and Miss Herriton. In all Mr. Forster's novels disinterested unfairness is, in fact, generic. The observation seems to be: what of it? A novelist is not an umpire. Mr. Forster does not exist to compile documents; he is an artist, with the right to be arbitrary. In the moral war he depicts there is no private justice; individual fates count for nothing.

His bad, his recalcitrant characters are the Enemy. For the most part they are flat characters (again, in his own sense), they do not expand or suffer; they seem to have no problems; they are opaque. Though they do not generate evil they do, like blocked gutters, receive, store and exhale it. These bad ones are simplified characters, used dramatically. The good characters are anti-

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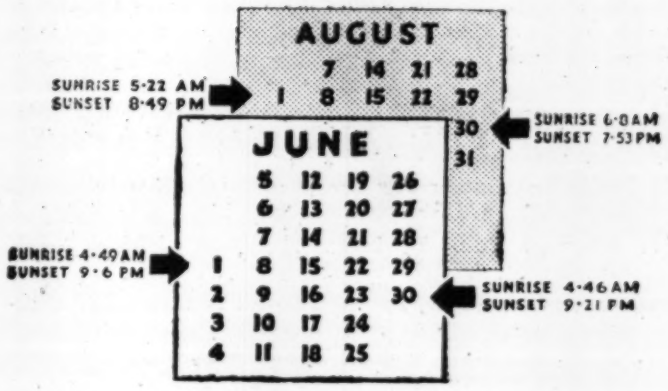

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was extensively practised in primeval times in the Marlborough district. Stonehenge, Avebury, the great camps on the Downs all show traces of the spots where it took place.

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heroic. They travel steadily, always painfully towards the light; they expose themselves; they suffer humiliations. At their greatest—Margaret Schlegel, Fielding—they are very positive. Then there is the neutral character, who is the battle-ground—Philip Herriton in *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Rickie in *The Longest Journey*, Lucy in *A Room with a View*, Mr. Wilcox in *Howard's End*, Adela in *A Passage to India*. A fourth group of people are the direct, the non-moral, the naturalistic—Gino, Stephen Wonham, George Emerson, Helen Schlegel, Aziz. These people behave intuitively; they suffer (with the exception of Stephen) but do not suffer morally. Conducting nature to the more complex characters, they have the importance of Italy, Wiltshire, the Indian scene.

The world of the novels opens a vast light landscape, in which every feature is dramatic, in which every object is not only sentient, living, but sends a current direct to the human nerves. This is a world of beauty which is intimidating. Its creatures, Mr. Forster's characters, dread, and rightly dread, the forces behind each other: chasms may open for them—and often do. But it is untrue to say these characters are intimidated by life: they are pugnacious; they stand up to what is dreadful in a queer mood, at once exalted and tough. They oppose the mass of darkness. Are these Forster people on the retreat now, or are they the forerunners of Vershinin's triumphant majority?

Mr. Forster is, first of all, our great novelist: all his other work is stamped with his fine mind, but is subsidiary to those five books. It was, however, high time that his work should be related into a body and its importance considered as a *whole*. A study of him was wanted, and had to be undertaken by someone whose range was wide, who could appreciate his range. Miss Rose Macaulay's study, *The Writings of E. M. Forster*, has been looked forward to, and now fulfils its promise. This is an outstanding piece of critical work. To begin with, Miss Macaulay has succeeded in writing both for those already familiar with Mr. Forster's writings and for those who still hardly know them at all. For the first, what she says will have the fascinating aspect of a discussion; to the second it will be at once invitation and guide. The structure of her book—which might be a difficult problem—is excellent: here is an intellectual portrait, with its background, and a comprehensive study of all Mr. Forster's work, with a simultaneous running analysis. His writings are considered from two points of view—as pure art and as the exposition of his feeling for life.

The analysis of the novels is brilliantly done: it cannot have been easy, in a few pages, to give the outline, the character, and above all the import of each. Besides this, there is an examination of the critical writings, the essays, the work on the novel, the prefaces, the biography and the guide book. Perhaps not enough is said about the short stories, whose technical interest is immense. In some of her most valuable chapters Miss Macaulay suggests the passing of time in those spaces between the too rare appearances of the books. Mr. Forster's intervals of silence have been a perplexity, as well as a deprivation. Silences, in a man from whom we have exorbitant expectations, take on a sort of positive character. Miss Macaulay has sketched something into the silences, described travel, touched in preoccupations. The greatest achievement of her book is that she has strung the works—from the longest novel down to the shortest essay—on what seems to be a line of personal continuity, so that the appearance of each, in its time, appears inevitable. Sympathy, admiration and unobtrusive perception have made her achievement possible. Her own style, pointed and lucid, and covering ground in a few and well-chosen words, her avoidance of constricting generalisations, and the smiling detachment with which criticisms are levelled, not only give *The Writings of E. M. Forster* a distinction worthy of its subject, but make it an important addition to the body of Miss Macaulay's work.

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Before the Storm. By BARONESS SOPHIE BUXHOEVEDEN. *Macmillan.* 15s.

Sunburst. By LOROL SCHOFFLOCHER. *Rider.* 15s.

Mrs. Compton Mackenzie has achieved a charming and original success in the field of autobiography. Nothing about her book is quite as you would expect it, but the unexpectedness, far from being haphazard, suggests unusual care in selection and composition. Everything is seen from a single point of view, her own: an attitude lazy without indifference, warm-hearted without gush, dry without cynicism. The dominant person in the book, however, is neither herself nor her celebrated husband, but her father, the Rev. E. D. Stone. An Assistant Master at Eton with advanced ideas, he decided in middle life to put them into practice; and Stonehouse, a preparatory school near Broadstairs, was the result. Mrs. Mackenzie does not attempt to assess her father's educational success, or even to picture closely his relationship with the boys—a subject already delightfully handled by two of his pupils. What she does give us is an admirably rounded portrait of the cultured Victorian liberal *en famille;* she achieves this by a neat mixture of personal reminiscence and novelist's invention. The problems and the conversations of "Edward" and "Lily" (her father and mother) become as real as those of a hero and heroine in Trollope—than which no praise could be higher. Edward's life was not altogether easy, for Lily was, much against her will, an almost perpetual invalid suffering from nervous prostration. While she wandered vainly in search of health from the Isle of Arran to the Isle of Man, her large family disported themselves at home or at various schools. Faith was the ninth, Christopher the tenth. She has a good memory for the real agonies of childhood:

> Every Sunday I woke with special reluctance. I knew that by my bed lay a clean pair of Jaeger combinations and a clean pair of Jaeger stockings. Those Jaeger combinations were of an incredible thickness and they washed into the consistency of leather lined with nettles. It was misery to force my body into this cruel sheath; even my arms were enveloped to the wrists. The stockings were rougher than the combinations and, leaving nothing to chance, were shaped like a baby's glove, with a partition for my big toe.

Meanwhile the minute, but already genial, Christopher Stone was writing fascinating letters to his mother:

> DEAR MOTHER,—Miss A this afternoon did make the dollshouse so nice she made new kertins with laysis all down it I do laysins from toelve akerk to half-past toelve-akerk, on Satterdays I dont do anny lasin atall . . .

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Your affectoirate
Christopher xxxxx

Visits are paid to relations, parsons mostly, but splendid Trollopian parsons, sensible and unecstatic; to Uncle Furse, for example, the Rector of Creeting, with his dozen children and his stud of thoroughbred Arabs. Occasionally he has to go up to London on ecclesiastical business, and then:

"I do hope your father will keep away from Tattersall's," said Aunt Lucy. "There seems to be a big sale on."

Everyone agreed that it would be better if he stuck to the ecclesiastical business.

The picture of a secluded, but not conventional, childhood in circles radiating outwards from an Etonian centre, reminded me often of that delightful little book *A Nineteenth Century Childhood*, by Mary MacCarthy. Both books suggest an atmosphere of solid, humane, somewhat clerical culture so sure of itself that it could afford to be tolerant and to take risks. But the romantic, self-willed disposition of Faith Stone led her far from this little world; about the turn of the century she joined Charles Hawtrey's company in a tiny part and toured with him in America; and not long afterwards a brilliant young friend of her brother's whirled her into a secret marriage which might have led anywhere. (The picture of Compton Mackenzie is a rapid, diverting, and apparently life-like sketch.) Edward, confiding to his diary his first impression that the event was a "bombshell," wrote to his daughter a letter of extraordinary generosity and trust:

DARLING FAITH,—I can't quite approve and yet I am not furiously angry, as I suppose a sensible parent should be. But I can imagine the charm of a romantic marriage with no trousseau or wedding breakfast. There is a spice of romance in this aged heart, and perhaps it has descended to you . . .

The remainder of the book, describing their married life in London and in Capri, continues to be interesting (Pélissier, Norman Douglas and Axel Munthe appear briefly), but it inevitably covers much ground already mapped in *Sinister Street* and *Vestal Fire*. Edward's death in 1916 brings the book to a sudden, but not inappropriate, end; if a new world has been born with no use for such men as him, then so much the worse for that world.

The opening chapter of Leslie Halward's autobiography would suggest his special gift even to those who had never met his excellent short stories: it is a vivid account of what it feels like when complications set in after appendicitis. He describes with remarkable power the sensation of extreme physical pain; a subject which always fascinates me, for it is (to me) the ultimate horror of our world. Behind every second column of the newspaper (air disasters, pit disasters, Barcelona, Abyssinia, Dachau, Vienna) the only reality is the agonised individual body: we all forget this, we have to or we should be sick over our breakfasts, but Mr. Halward, describing nothing worse than hospital routine, recalls to us the awful implications of the news. Apart from this, his book is the straightforward, very readable account of a Birmingham butcher's son who worked for years as a toolmaker and then as a plasterer: neither of which trades suited him, for he seems to lack the manual dexterity which is essential for such work and is possessed by so surprisingly large a number of people. Suddenly, "for no reason at all that he could think of," he wanted to write; for twenty years he had taken no interest in literature, read nothing, not even penny dreadfuls; yet there he was, faced with this inexplicable urge. It led him to the local library, to the discovery of Chekov, finally to the success of his own work, which has appeared in *The London Mercury*, *New Writing*, and elsewhere. All who are interested in the emergence of proletarian writing and writers should read *Let Me Tell You*.

Baroness Buxhoeveden's book, though less selective than either of the above, is well worth browsing about in for its account of Russian country life before the Revolution in the Central Volga district. The picture of the "good old days" is more or less unsentimentalised; for example, Grandfather is not quite the benevolent old autocrat of tradition, but something of a blusterer too. The author's recollections of her visits to the palace between 1904 and 1914 do not add much to our knowledge of Tsar and Tsarina, but they underline the pathetic hopelessness of his position. On page 158 occurs a sentence which may well cause a pang in 1938: "pity towards all prisoners, whatever their doings, was firmly rooted in the simple Russian mind." Firmly?

Miss Lorol Schofflocher is such a grand woman that she must be allowed to speak for herself:

This book is for all who, like myself, have lived and loved, drunk deeply, danced abandonedly, sought happiness in the satisfaction of the insatiable senses—and have found only boredom and despair. It is for you who have scanned your mirrored image and found nothing behind the perfumes and cosmetics but a hollow mask of clay; who have felt the highball grow bitter in your mouth and the cigarette smoke without taste . . .

She has a juicy touch on the Wurlitzer.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

IN DARKEST EUROPE

South of Hitler. By M. W. FODOR. *Allen and Unwin.* 10s. 6d.

Mr. Fodor's book has appeared in time for confirmation of his darkest forebodings. He did not consider the "Anschluss" inevitable and believed that if the German attack could be postponed, the Danubian States would draw closer together and the menace of Pan-German imperialist expansion would be averted. Indeed, he was rather more optimistic than other competent observers of Central European affairs, but he gave his warning nevertheless: "Even if to-day it looks as if Austria is to be saved, one never knows . . . Austria may yet succumb." And, if either Austria or Czechoslovakia fall, then "the way is open for Germany to the south-east." Since Mr. Fodor wrote, Austria has fallen and the way is open.

Although the European situation has been transformed since he wrote, his book is not out of date. Events have made some of it a guide to the past and to what might have been. But most of it remains a guide to the present—and therefore to the future.

In his sweeping retrospect he has examined the main forces that have made Central European and Balkan history and will continue to make it for a long time to come, perhaps for generations to come.

His account of the Pan-German movement, which is now celebrating its big victory in Vienna, is of exceptional interest. Without a knowledge of that movement and all its accretions, the principal European problem of to-day, the German problem, must remain incomprehensible. It is an error to attribute the rise of Hitler to the Treaty of Versailles. Mr. Fodor shows how all the ideas that have gone to the making of *Mein Kampf*—the Koran of German neo-imperialism—existed before the Great

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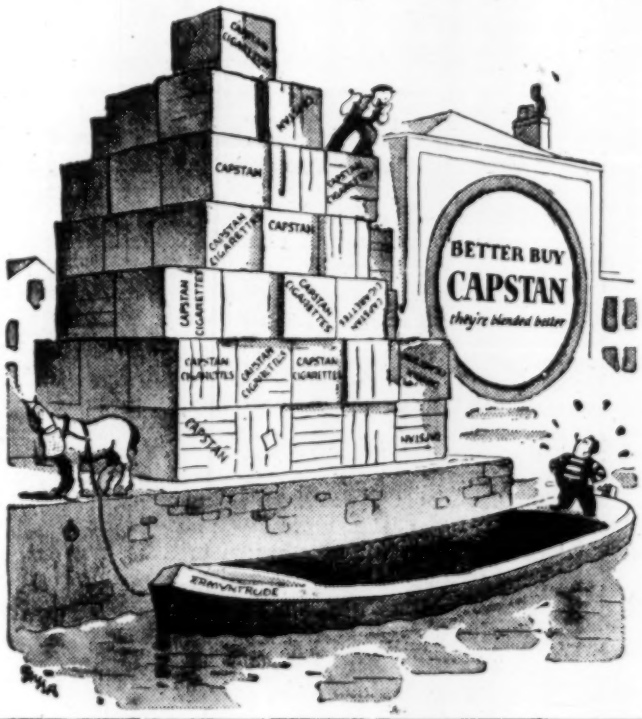
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War and how the policy of the Third Realm is the resumption and the development of pre-war German and Austrian policies.

"National Socialism," according to Mr. Fodor, "was . . . the product of Marxist teaching." That statement, as it stands, is too broad, for National Socialism is a stream formed by many tributaries. But that it is powerfully fed by Marxism is quite true. It is, as its name shows, not only *nationalistic* but also *Socialistic*. German and Austrian anti-semitism is inextricably bound up with anti-capitalism. Hitler is certainly a Socialist and, within national limits, an egalitarian.

Mr. Fodor also touches on the forces that have made Italian Fascism (which is not the same thing as Austro-German National Socialism, though there is a certain kinship between them). Mussolini was strongly influenced by Sorel. The Guild Socialism that had a certain vogue in England before the war has also gone to the making of Fascism, largely through the intermediary of the Austrian, Othmar Spann.

A full inquiry into the origins of the various "-isms" (as Mr. Fodor calls them) that afflict Europe to-day, is badly needed. Dealing as he does with countries and policies, rather than with ideas, Mr. Fodor deals but briefly with this aspect of the European problem. But he does so with great penetration and one would like to appeal to him for a further book in which he would amplify this most important theme. Such a book would have great value in so far as it would help to dispel one of the greatest evils from which Europe is suffering, namely fanatical partisanship in causes that seem antagonistic to one another, but are fundamentally akin.

His immense reading combined with practical experience of Central European and Balkan politics give him an unsurpassed authority. His book has substance for many books. Its range and penetration are extraordinary. It has its lighter touches (though some of the Americanisms might have been omitted, for they are awkward rather than light—if there is a new edition, that philological monstrosity "airplanes" should be replaced by "aeroplanes").

The history of Austria as an independent state has now come to an end, and Central Europe and the Balkans are faced with a new destiny. Even Turkey will be affected—she will also play a growing part in the difficult and treacherous Mediterranean problem.

The ever more interested world will watch events in all the countries that come under Mr. Fodor's survey with fascinated attention, for the drama that has now begun is of Napoleonic dimensions. The spectators of this drama will find in Mr. Fodor a sober-minded and penetrating guide. F. A. VOIGT

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THE SAINT OF MODERN POETRY

Rainer Maria Rilke: Aspects of His Mind and Poetry. Edited by WILLIAM ROSE and G. CRAIG HOUSTON. *Sidgwick and Jackson.* 6s.

In Rilke's poetry symbolism is not a literary habit of mind nor even a formula for manufacturing beauty, but a way of contemplating the world and experience. The angels of the Duinesen Elegies are not the fauna of a Christian hierarchy, they are the incarnations of the poem itself, the concentrated and self-reflecting symbols of an acceptance which Rilke was able to attain at the end of his life in these elegies. They resemble the angels of El Greco's paintings, which seem like projections of the spirit of the painting; and it is interesting to read in Mr. E. L. Stahl's essay that the landscape near Toledo gave Rilke the fullest realisation of what the angels of his elegies signified.

The objects of the real world had for Rilke the significance of figures in an enormous myth which was life. Each figure was a clue which, if sufficiently contemplated, could reveal not itself, but an aspect of the whole myth. In his living and writing Rilke seized on countries, men and women, animals and objects, in his pursuit of the complete vision which all of them partially reflected. Often the object itself is submerged in the intensity of what it reveals. Unless this is understood, one may well complain that Rilke is subjective to the point of preciosity. For example, going to Russia before the war, he did not show the slightest awareness of the conditions that were to lead to the revolution; what he saw, to the exclusion of everything else, was the religious soul of the Russian. He was not interested in the appearance of objects in themselves; he was absorbed in a wider experience into which they were doorways.

So deeply grown was Rilke into this pursuit of a timeless reality beyond his environment, that it is difficult often to think of him as a contemporary. One learns with a shock that, after reading an essay by Freud, he considered being psycho-analysed, and that one of the Duinesen Elegies was suggested by a picture of acrobats by Picasso. Yet, as these essays show, Rilke has a greater significance to us in England than any other modern Continental poet.

How explain this? The writers of this book supply, I think, the answer. Rilke is one of the great saints of art, in fact the great saint of modern poetry. He deliberately exploited his sensations and sought out those experiences which seemed to him a way of living from day to day the material of his poems; as Mr. E. L. Stahl shows in his informative essay on the Duinesen Elegies, Rilke sought in this great work to resolve the theme of lament from his earlier poetry into one of acceptance and joy; and this search depended from years of deliberately sought experience and contemplation before it could be achieved in the poem. It is no exaggeration to say that Rilke consciously lived through his poems before he wrote them, and tested every symbol by an act of his will in life. In its devoted concentration on a subject of wider significance than its own limitations, Rilke's own life was like a symbol in one of his poems, he was the "terrible angel," perhaps, of the Elegies. Like Van Gogh, he chose art as the way of life; and, therefore, like Van Gogh, his letters and works have a quite absorbing fascination for us because they are not merely about art, they teach us how to live.

This book is a remarkable tribute to an important poet. Perhaps it is on account of his artistic integrity that Rilke seems to evoke the best qualities in his admirers. The admirer always reflects to some extent the qualities of his subject; consider, for example, the reflections of glamour, delusion, vanity, persecution and intolerance, cast by the burnished features of Stefan George. But here even Stefan Zweig—that romantic worshipper at the shrine of the "deutscher Daemon"—is modest, restrained and informative in his introduction to Rilke the man. Perhaps the most exciting of these essays is William Rose's on *Rilke and the Conception of Death;* Mass Observers should certainly read it. Mr. C. M. Bowra is illuminating on the *Neue Gedichte*, and he is the one writer here who, besides being instructive and appreciative, makes a serious attempt to judge Rilke's work in a critical light. The editors have made a serious mistake in not publishing

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CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

ROMILLY CAVAN

translations of the passages quoted in these essays; for this book must be of interest to many people who cannot read German, and even for those who can, Rilke's German is often difficult.

One may suspect Rilke's self-withdrawal, be impatient of his failure to appreciate the political conflicts of his time, condemn at times a shrinking but deep self-regard; yet finally, I think, one accepts him, because the challenge which remains in one's mind is not whether Rilke has anything to contribute to any social philosophy, but whether every form of society must not be tested by just such a life as he led of devotion to poetic experience. He is not merely a poet, he is living poetry. His life is an expression of that phrase of Thomas Mann, which reads to-day as a clearer and clearer warning: "Karl Marx must read Friedrich Hoelderlin."

STEPHEN SPENDER

MR. NICHOLS : NEW PHASE

News of England. By BEVERLEY NICHOLS. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.

Mr. Beverley Nichols is a very impressionable person. In the post-war period of the Bright Young Things he wrote *Crazy Pavements* and other books which exactly reflected that not very creditable epoch. Somewhat illogically, now that he has reached the point of wanting the country to rise up from its degeneracy, he complains that *Crazy Pavements* has been banned from some public libraries and compares this outrage with the burning of the books in Germany after the Nazi triumph. I do not suppose Mr. Nichols really thinks *Crazy Pavements* as important to our cultural heritage as Heine or Freud, but that is the kind of argument he thinks of when he wants to find a justification for the Nazis.

After the crazy period, the headache and repentance, cultivation of the soil and of the soul. But the peace of the Garden and the Thatched Roof was rudely interrupted by the revelations in a series of great war books, and Mr. Nichols was moved to write his best and most sincere work, *Cry Havoc*. Yet neither pacifism nor hollyhocks proved permanently satisfying, and he entered on a new phase; his soul, unsatisfied, sought leadership and certainty in the drift of fashion towards Dr. Buchman, who, it should always be remembered, "thanks God for Hitler." To-day his sympathy for the under-dog, and his fear that we are growing degenerate has led him almost—if not quite—to the natural goal of well-to-do people who have social consciences, but not social understanding. From pleasantly written discussions of the futility of our pleasures, dog racing, pools and such-like, he returns to consider the unemployed and the difficulty of giving them work that is worth while to do, and finally describes an interview with Sir Oswald Mosley, whose leadership he cannot altogether accept because he remembers the unhappiness of Jewish children under Hitler. He accepts without question the accounts of the attacks on Sir Oswald Mosley; one would think from reading his accounts that the Fascists were a body of gentle patriots set upon and assaulted by armed thugs. It has never even occurred to him that violence is what Fascism thrives on, and that it may be a dangerous kind of provocation to a breach of the peace for uniformed men, wearing the badges and crying the slogans which have martyred a people, to form processions and carry their propaganda into the streets where Jews have for generations lived inoffensively and at peace with their neighbours.

Mr. Nichols does not mean to do harm; he is just impressionable and takes insufficient trouble to find out the facts. He is the ideal dupe just because he is, in a superficial way, so nice and well-meaning. He would hate the Fascism for which he is a propagandist. If he could start with his mind open to other aspects and other facts I could imagine his writing another book based on the terrible facts of international Fascism, its barbarity, its immense machine of lying, its complete cynicism and its skilful use in all countries of just such well-intentioned people as Mr. Nichols himself. Given the right contacts, Mr. Nichols' next book should be devoted to the necessity of a Popular Front to save our heritage of freedom, to preserve the wit and culture of France and the under-dog's right to a say in his own destiny.

JOHN BULL

INSIDE PRISON

The Prisoner Speaks. By H. W. WICKS. *Jarrolds.* 10s. 6d.
Lifer. By JIM PHELAN. *Peter Davies.* 8s. 6d.

Sir Samuel Hoare has a lot on his hands, but I hope he will find time to read these books. They are both the result of actual experience in prison and touch on sides of prison life which the prison reformer may easily miss. They do not give accounts of physical brutality, but deal rather with more subtle evils which only the prisoner himself is likely fully to understand.

Mr. Wicks is an unusual type of prisoner. He was sentenced to a year's imprisonment for a defamatory libel as a result, according to his own account, of mistaken evidence. Several chapters of his book deal with his efforts to get new evidence considered by the courts. There are some rather mysterious references to powerful interests which want him out of the way, and a circumstantial account of his various applications and interviews which certainly do not seem to have received adequate attention. But on this part of the book it is better to say little, if only because one gathers that the case may be publicly reopened before very long. For the rest, the book gives a straightforward account of life in Wormwood Scrubs and pictures of notorious figures, such as Howeson, Bishergian and Arnold Leese (doing Fascist propaganda in gaol). The dust cover describes the book as a "compelling indictment of English prisondom"; and Mr. Wicks unwisely quotes a description of British prisons as "the nearest approach to hell that God permits on earth." This is silly and not at all borne out by his narrative which is not, on the whole, unfavourable to Wormwood Scrubs or to the prison staff; there is full acknowledgment of recent improvements and tributes to doctors, officers and governors and a most interesting description of debates and the restricted, but real intellectual life among a mixed crowd of thieves, share-pushers and various other types of crook. There are also curious stories of smuggled liquor, and a penetrating discussion of the problem of sex in gaol, a proper condemnation of prison as a treatment for neurotics and some pertinent comments on the disadvantages of poverty in obtaining justice in British law courts.

Lifer is a terrible book. It is so written that no times, places or persons can be identified, but it is clear that the writer has at some time or other gained intimate knowledge of both Dartmoor and Parkhurst. The story is of a decent man who is given a life sentence and who tries with every resource at his command to

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THE LEADERSHIP OF THE LEFT

What Are We to Do? By JOHN STRACHEY. *Gollancz.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

John Strachey's writing has always the high merit of clarity and forcefulness; and these qualities are very strongly present in his latest book. He has, very keenly, the sense that the Labour and Socialist movement everywhere, and in Great Britain in particular, is facing a crisis which will be decisive for the future of European civilisation. Armed with his Marxist philosophy, he possesses the assurance that the forces of history are making towards Socialism; but he is also insistent that men and movements make their own history within the determining conditions, and that this cannot be made for them by the sheer force of events. He begins with a long analysis of the nature of Labour movements, with special reference to the development of Trade Unionism and Labour politics in Great Britain. In the course of this analysis he seeks to trace the failure of British Socialism to rise to the height of its opportunities to its domination, not by Marxism, but by a peculiar brand of "British Socialism," derived by the Fabians from the diluted classical economics of Mill and Jevons and from a theory of the State which involved the view that the political machine could be simply captured by the Socialists and used without fundamental change as the instrument of their purpose.

To this lack of a philosophy, or rather to this wrong philosophy, Mr. Strachey attributes the failure of British Socialists to give an effective lead to the rank and file of the British working class. In the second part of his book he goes on to consider, under the title of the "New Model," what is requisite in order to supply the necessary leadership in the challenging circumstances of to-day. He calls for a "New Model" party as confident in its beliefs and as disciplined in action as Cromwell's "New Model" Army. Such a party, he contends, must have behind it an essential unity of faith and doctrine, and a democratic discipline which will ensure that all things shall be discussed fully and frankly within its ranks, but that when once a decision has been reached every member shall act upon it without further questioning. This party, which is of course identified in Mr. Strachey's mind with the Communist Party, is not, however, to supersede the Labour Party as it now exists, with its federal basis of Trade Union and Local Labour Party affiliations and its openness to many different points of view. The "New Model" and the "Old Model" are to exist side by side; but to the former falls the duty of acting as the spearhead of the whole movement and of unifying its divided activities by applying a clear-cut philosophy to the immediate needs and problems of the main body of the working class. In other words, Mr. Strachey is putting forward the reasoned case for accepting the Communist Party into affiliation with the Labour Party and for recognising in it the legitimate successor of that body of Socialists which, in the first making of the Labour Party, attempted to put itself at the head of a united political movement of the working class.

Mr. Strachey's argument thus falls broadly into two parts—his plea for a disciplined inner group of Socialists so organised as effectively to take the lead in the formulation of working-class policy and strategy, and his identification of the Communist Party with the Messiah who is called for by the circumstances of to-day. Many supporters of the Labour Party will be disposed, in view of the dangerous vacillations of Labour Party and Trade Union policy in recent years, to agree with him upon the first head, without being necessarily convinced that he is also right on the second. If, however, so much *is* conceded, it remains for those who are unprepared to accept Communist guidance to devise alternative methods of equipping the working-class movement with the leadership which it needs. For assuredly if democracy continues to vacillate much longer, the cause is lost.

VALUES AND DILEMMAS

The Moral Basis of Politics. By NAOMI MITCHISON. *Constable.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

This is a sincere, intelligent, well and simply written book. Naomi Mitchison has a technical capacity peculiar to herself; to this she adds an ethical and an aesthetic sensibility which seems to be a common possession of her family. Of her hereditary debt she is fully aware; for here is the dedication of her book: "In memory of my father, John Scott Haldane, who was a Fellow of the Royal Society and held other honours, both formal and in the minds of men, and of whom I say, as Xenophon said once of Socrates: When I consider both the wisdom and the nobility of the man, I find it is beyond my power not to have him in mind or, having him in mind, not to praise him." Dr. J. S. Haldane is a father of whom any daughter might well be proud; judged by this book alone, Naomi Mitchison is a daughter of whom her distinguished father might equally be proud. So much for the author: what of the intellectual content of her book?

It is concerned with fundamentals rather than with incidentals; with basic principles rather than with temporary expediencies. With almost topical prescience, the author writes: "I am very sure that moral integrity is necessary for those who deal with politics." She does not believe in the moral disintegration which her contemporaries "smell everywhere"; and she is impressed with "the seriousness and stability with which quantities of ordinary men and women" are facing contemporary problems. "One cannot judge a country," she writes, "by its movies or its Bloomsburys, or by the advertisements in its daily papers." She claims no absoluteness for her postulates, but modestly says that her book "is written and argued within our Western culture pattern and in terms of its rights and wrongs." She recognises that "we are in a world which has to take account of money, stupidity, illness, status, snobbery, the difficulty of not being able to be in two places at once, the fact that people take offence, and, again and again, money in some form or other."

We are made to realise—if we had not already realised—that political problems have none of the simplicity of the problems of applied physics, chemistry and mathematics. There is but little ground for disagreement when we are considering such matters as a main drainage system, or the structural strength of a bridge. In things like these, nearly everyone is in agreement as to what is wanted; possible controversy is limited to what we class as technical considerations. In politics, on the other hand, there is infinite scope for difference of opinion; for we are concerned with matters the relative importance of which varies according to our several scales of value.

The Moral Basis of Politics is not a book that can be adequately reviewed in a few words; for nearly every page is both suggestive and provocative. A mere indication of the subjects with which Mrs. Mitchison deals and of the way in which she treats them is all that is here possible. She is concerned largely with the problems of good and evil in political action and in political organisation and with the methods whereby the good may most hopefully be pursued. She agrees that good and evil are necessarily relative terms, in the interpretation of which time and place, as well as variations in human psycho-physiological make-up, have modifying relevance. The "good" that she desires roughly coincides with that which, at the present day, she believes most Western people regard as "the good"—at any rate, as the political good. She holds that everything which stops people from being as much and as thoroughly as possible themselves is, to that extent, evil; and that any system in which one group of people imposes upon another group of people and stops them from being themselves is, to that extent, also evil. She, of course, recognises that those who "carry out their capacities and sensibilities must do so in such a manner that they do not thwart other individuals or groups who are doing the same thing." The author does not leave the matter here. In chapter after chapter, she considers, with striking sincerity and simplicity of mind, yet subtlety of intellect, the implications of these axioms and the qualifications they may temporarily call for in their application. One of the most thought-stimulating chapters is that devoted to the problem of violence as a means of effecting desirable social changes. Here, she is thoroughly realist, with no extreme preconceived conclusions to which facts must fit as best they can. But she recognises the often-neglected truth that means nearly always affect ends—not merely the ends attained but the ends ultimately sought. Harmony and loving-kindness rarely result from violence and hatred. "We find ourselves wanting to have a different end, one which will fit

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in logically and emotionally with the means . . . and, although a few people can usually keep their heads and remember the end they wanted in the beginning (as Lenin seems to have done so amazingly), the majority are unlikely to do so." Yet Mrs. Mitchison does not believe that economic equality, without which she considers "the good life" is not achievable, can be attained by "gradualism." "There is no chance of a slow attainment of economic equality. It will have to be done by something sudden." The section following on the passage I have just quoted is headed: "Is there an Alternative to Violence?" A very large part of the remainder of the book is devoted to a searching investigation into the problem thus presented.

I believe this to be one of the most important political books published in recent years. HARRY ROBERTS

GOOD VALUE

Sandro Botticelli. With Introduction by LIONELLO VENTURI. *Allen and Unwin.* 10s. 6d.

Degas. By CAMILLE MAUCLAIR. *Heinemann.* 10s. 6d.

Cézanne. With Introduction by FRITZ NOVOTNY. *Allen and Unwin.* 10s. 6d.

The Impressionists. With Introduction by WILLIAM UNDE. *Allen and Unwin.* 10s. 6d.

All four books are very good value. The three from the Phaidon Press (Allen and Unwin publish them in England) have fine large monochrome plates, while in their *Cézanne* the colour reproduction is unusually good. With all deference to Professor Venturi and M. Mauclair, it is a little boring to find aesthetic lucubrations still ousting interesting facts from introductions. Herr Unde and Herr Novotny (who write introductions to *Impressionists* and *Cézanne* respectively) have obviously been ill-served in translation, but one suspects that, even in the original, Novotny was involved and headachey, and Unde's extraordinary scheme for aesthetic valuation according to the use of grey could only exist where there was no sense of the ridiculous.

A subtitle to *The Impressionists* is "the Great Century of French Painting." A more explanatory form would perhaps have been "Manet and Some Impressionist Followers." For Manet, whose painting was a mixture of bravura, eclecticism and what Degas called "Spanish bluff," is in a way too conceptual an artist to fit in with the rigidly empirical method of pure impressionism. The true impressionist observed the world around him in terms of light vibrations—Manet was always conscious of the name and nature of what he painted. But Manet was the perfect *chef d'école*. His brilliant performances gave the Impressionist exhibitions an air of solidity and confidence which otherwise, especially in early years, they would sadly have lacked. And his extraordinary gift for finding subjects has influenced every painter of contemporary life since. Hardly one of the forty-six Manets reproduced here that has not half a dozen well-known descendants. A book which takes note of Eva Gonzalez, Gauguin and Toulouse Lautrec, and ignores Seurat, Bazille, and Guillaumin, is necessarily a little unbalanced. But it is impossible adequately to deal with the whole movement in a book of this size, and the inclusion of only sixteen works by Renoir and twelve by Degas acknowledges the impossibility as clearly as does the relegation of Cézanne to a separate volume. The *Cézanne* illustrations are well chosen and well arranged. Pictures are in chronological order with dates; other details as to size, ownership, and so on, are in the index. The inclusion of these essentials is a step in the right direction towards the perfect art book, the catalogue *raisonné*, with reproductions as good as these and all the facts given on the same page. In M. Mauclair's *Degas* the pictures are in any sort of order, most of the dates and sizes (but not all) are in the index. It also includes the first English translation of the not very revealing Degas letters. *Botticelli* and *The Impressionists* have well-informed indexes.

Mr. Fry once said that the history of European painting was a "gradual discovery of appearances." In the line from the Almighty-against-a-gilt-background to the complex representation of space and light in which the nineteenth century culminated, Botticelli, an archaicist even in his time, comes early, Degas, the cleverest representational painter that ever lived, is the end. Both are well established among the great, both are masters of line. And the difference between their work is nearly as great as it could be. In Botticelli the line is a sensuous arabesque, lilting and languorous in turn. Mellifluous curves enclose the forms and even relate them to similar forms, but not to the enveloping air or to objects out of the relatively shallow stage on which the action takes place. From these beauty-stricken youths and girls against their painted world, to the bare truth of a Degas dancer on a stage devoid of romance the change is greater than can be accounted simply by new discoveries in representational technique. And it is probably in their relations with the world that the source of the differences between Degas and Botticelli is to be found. In the dangerous hurly-burly of life at the end of the quattrocento it is easy to imagine the extra-sensitive artist becoming remote and idealistic. In the nineteenth century the sensitive man (for if anything Degas was more sensitive than Botticelli) has easier methods of adapting himself. The cynical *rentier* in a materialist democracy could afford to be a realist, Botticelli could not. If it was foreign to his nature to be cynical, it was impossible in his surroundings for him to be a materialist. In an age favourable to realism Degas was the most material of painters; in an age when the terrifying uncertainty of life made escape the object of all desires, Botticelli was the most dreamy of artists. GRAHAM BELL

SHORTER NOTICES

Madcap's Progress: THE LIFE OF JOHN MYTTON. By RICHARD DARWALL. *Dent.* 18s.

"Amazing" and "eccentric" are the adjectives appended, on the dust cover, to the subject of this biography. They indicate qualities which are better packed into an essay than admired at length. John Mytton has already been "done" briefly by Virginia Woolf in *The Common Reader, II*, and by Edith Sitwell in *English Eccentrics*. For a full-length Life, there is the obituary volume by a crony, C. J. Apperley, published in 1837. And where does Mr. Darwall's volume come in? Well, it is an admirably illustrated, big-printed, comfortably padded account of the sporting Squire and his times. Gross enough times they were, with Beau Brummel at the head of the dandies and Squire Mytton cracking his way like a mad yokel across Shropshire. His exploits are nearly all of the ditch-clearing, gig-upsetting order, and after a time they cease to divert. Mr. Darwall tries to add interest to Mytton's character by mentioning his wit, of which he gives no example, and balancing dissipation with a kind heart. The high-spots of his career of 38 years were a dinner-party at which he rode in on the back of a bear, and the drunken moment near the end of his life when, being shaken with a hiccup, he shouted "Damn this hiccup, I'll frighten it away!" and set light to his nightshirt. As a result he was so badly burnt that he nearly died. An imbecile courage does, indeed, illuminate Mr. Darwall's pages; that and the pathos of Mytton's drunken collapse and exile in Calais make the book readable. But though Mytton rode, ate and drank prodigiously in Shropshire, though he married twice and twice stood for Parliament, though his practical jokes surpassed everyone else's in violence, he is too childish a figure for genteel biography of Mr. Darwall's sort. "Nature is in the habit now and then of throwing off, as it were, notable specimens. Now it is a Shakespeare, now a Caesar, now a Mozart, now a Casanova; of such in a degree was John Mytton." Admiration, perhaps, such a subject needs from his biographer, but it should not be literary.

The Stock Exchange Official Year-Book. Edited by the SECRETARY OF THE SHARE AND LOAN DEPT. OF THE STOCK EXCHANGE. *T. Skinner and Co.* 60s.

As an old proverb says, "we never know the worth of water till the well goes dry," so it would take the non-appearance, even for a year, of this financial directory to make us really appreciate its utility. This year's edition follows in arrangement the model of previous volumes, and shows, once again, an increased number of pages at a total nearing 4,000, with the listing of about 300 securities or companies more than last year. The first section (containing an admirably complete index) gives information on the London and Provincial Stock Exchanges. Special chapters on Dominion, Colonial and Municipal finance, together with a résumé of the legal decisions of 1937 affecting company law, comprise the second. Then follows "Groups of Securities and Companies" which is the largest section of all. It gives full details of many thousands of companies and securities, obscure and well known. A section of general financial information and forms concludes the volume, which is, as hitherto, an example of how good print, adequate binding and suitable paper can surmount the material difficulties of producing a book of this size.

Week-end Competitions

No. 421

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BOOKS. *First Editions:* Pansics, William Clissold, Goodbye to All That, Farewell to Arms, The Somme, Death of a Hero. *Fanfrolico:* Women in Parliament, Lysistrata, Loving Mad Tom, Anti-Christ Nietzsche, Lord Ormont and his Aminta, 3 vols., Subaltern on the Somme, Poems Trahearne Dobell, Burton's Arabian Nights, 17 vols., not new. What offers? RANDS, 7 Hawke Road, S.E.19.

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THE BOOKNOOK, New Street, Worthing, Sussex.

The usual prizes (Two Guineas and Half a Guinea) are offered for a new and original verse form of use primarily as a vehicle for humorous comment. Entries should consist of a single example of the new form (with, if considered necessary, descriptive note). The competitor is also asked to give his effort a name.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, April 8.
2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.
3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.
4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 419

Set by G. W. Stonier

The lines by Dr. Johnson beginning

Wealth, my lad, was made to wander
Let it wander when it will

might easily be attributed to A. E. Housman. We offer the usual prizes (Two Guineas and Half a Guinea) for the best examples of a poem or passage from a poem which similarly suggests authorship other than its own. Even single lines—if striking enough—are eligible.

Report by G. W. Stonier

I had no book to read over the week-end, but competitors provided me with one—an anthology of a delightful kind. Unlike most anthologies, it had a point and it was full of surprises. If one read these pieces (some 250) first under the light of their false signatures and then tried to guess the real authors, it puzzled as well as amused. How many people, I wonder, could say straight off who was the author of the familiar "A rose-red city half as old as time"? It is not difficult to find echoes of the great poets, or resemblances between contemporaries.

Midnight past! Not a sound of aught
Through the silent house, but the wind at his prayers.
I sat by the dying fire, and thought
Of the dear dead woman upstairs.

Browning? No, Owen Meredith. As "Quint," sending this, points out, stanzas and whole poems by Owen Meredith might be taken for Browning. Another competitor, lured by the same sort of resemblance, produces the delightful:

Perhaps it was right to dissemble your love,
But—why did you kick me downstairs?

with the ascription, "J. P. Kemble, *The Panel*, Act I, Sc. I—these lines seem to have strayed from the works of C. S. Calverley." Obviously such discoveries do not qualify for a prize, but they made the task of judging this competition unusually enjoyable. Not echoes of other (and usually better) poets, but intimations in one good poet of a later one were what I wanted. And in unearthing these a large number of competitors showed both erudition and wit. I liked as much as any the following poem, sent by "V. S.-W." and suggesting Mr. Eliot:

O how my mind
Is gravelled;
Not a thought
That I can find
But's ravelled
All to nought.
Short ends of threads
And narrow shreds
Of lists,
Knots, gnarled ruffs,
Loose broken tufts,
Of twists,
All my torn meditations ragged clothing,
Which, wound and wound, shape a suit of nothing;
One which I think and then I am in pain
To think how to unthink that thought again.

The source is given as "The Synagogue is the Shadow of the Temple, a series of poems in imitation of Herbert's Temple." When it was written and by whom, we are not told. It is admirably pervaded by what one might call the Eliot predicament; and yet, much as I like it, I can hardly give it a prize without being unfair to others. We cannot for a moment persuade ourselves that these lines were actually written by Mr. Eliot. It seems to me essential, in this competition of false signatures, that to some extent we should be taken in. I was puzzled by the apparent genuineness of these:

(*a*) Hosannahs ran through Hell's tremendous borders,
And Satan's self had thought of taking orders.—*Byron.*

(*b*) Similitudes contracted, smooth, and round:
Not vexed by learning, but with Nature crown'd.
Strong figures drawn from deep invention's springs
Consisting less in words, and more in things.—*Pope.*

(*c*) Voici les lieux charmants où mon âme ravie
Passait à contempler Sylvie,
Ces tranquilles moments si doucement perdus.
Qui je l'aimais alors! Que je la trouvais belle!
Mon coeur vous soupirez au nom de l'infidèle:
Avez-vous oublié que vous ne l'aimez plus?—*Lamartine.*

(*d*) The night was winter in his roughest mood;
The morning sharp and clear. But now at noon
Upon the southern side of the slant hills,
And where the woods fence off the northern blast,
The season smiles, resigning all its rage,
And has the warmth of May. The vault is blue
Without a cloud, and white without a speck
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.—*Wordsworth.*

(*e*) Woe! woe! the veil of coming centuries
Is rent—a thousand years which yet supine
Lie like the ocean waves ere winds arise,
Heaving in dark and silent undulation.—*Blake.*

(*f*) Walk for the pilgrim, while thou has day's light;
Drive from desert, draw to thy dwelling-place;
Speed home, for why? Anon comes the night
Which does thee follow with an at hand chase!—*Hopkins.*

(*g*) O that in tears from my rocky prison streaming
I too could glide to the bower of my love!
Ah, where the woodbines with sleepy arms have wound her
Opes she her eyelids at the dream of my lay.—*Meredith.*

(*h*) No, I do know that I was born
To age, misfortune, sickness, grief:
But I will bear these with that scorn
As shall not need thy false-relief.

Nor for my peace will I go far,
As wanderers do, that still do roam;
But make my strengths, such as they are,
Here in my bosom, and at home.—*Emily Brontë.*

Actual authorship: (*a*) Gray, (*b*) Sir John Beaumont (d. 1628), (*c*) Boileau, (*d*) Cowper, (*e*) Byron, (*f*) Dunbar, (*g*) Darley, (*h*) Ben Jonson. These come very near winning a prize. After some doubts I recommend that the first prize be divided between "Quint," A. E. Buchanan and A. P.-R., and that the second prize go to Colyn.

FIRST PRIZE (1)
HOUSMAN?

When the sun steps from the billow
On the steep and stairless sky,
Up, I say, and quit my pillow;
Bed, for many an hour, good-bye!

Swiftly to the East I turn me,
Where the world's great lustre beams,
Warm to bathe, but not to burn me,
In its radiant fount of streams.

—Darley's *The Wild Bee's Tale*

FIRST PRIZE (2)
D. H. LAWRENCE?

They see the Scythian
On the wide Stepp, unharnessing
His wheel'd house at noon.
He tethers his beast down, and makes his meal,
Mares' milk and bread
Baked on the embers: all around
The boundless waving grass-plains stretch, thick-starred
With saffron and yellow hollyhock
And flag-leav'd iris flowers.
Sitting in his cart
He makes his meal: before him, for long miles,
Alive with bright green lizards,
And the springing bustard fowl,
The track, a straight black line,
Furrows the rich soil: here and there
Clusters of lonely mounds topp'd with rough-hewn,
Grey, rain-blear'd statues, overpeer
The sunny Waste.

—*The Strayed Reveller*, by Matthew Arnold

FIRST PRIZE (3)
TENNYSON?

A moment, and its glory was no more:
The sun went down beneath the long dark lines
Of hill and cloud, which piled up in the West
An airy city . . .

Company Meeting

ASSOCIATED PORTLAND CEMENT MANUFACTURERS

SIR P. MALCOLM STEWART ON THE COAL POSITION

The annual general meeting of the Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers, Limited, was held on Wednesday, in London.

Sir P. Malcolm Stewart, Bt., the Chairman, presiding, said that the total revenue for the year at £1,594,828 is down by £92,522, and the balance of profit—after the provision of £417,150 for depreciation, £67,917 for debenture stock sinking funds and other charges—at £934,228 compares with £929,617. A final dividend of 15 per cent. on the ordinary stock was recommended, making 22½ per cent. for the year. Continuing, Sir Malcolm said (in part):—

Trading conditions during the early part of last year were somewhat adversely affected by unfavourable climatic conditions. However, when these changed an improved demand was experienced, and at the close of the year we had made record deliveries of Blue Circle Portland cement. The influence of increased turnover, though helpful, was insufficient to maintain the trading profits at last year's figure in the face of the increased cost of manufacture.

Our consistent policy of endeavour to thwart the tendency of rising prices, which are bound to curtail construction and building activity, is again demonstrated by our holding down prices during the year, despite the rising cost of production.

It is interesting to note that the wages paid by us have been advanced by some 180 per cent. since March, 1914, and this increase does not take account of the cost of decreasing working hours from 56½ to 48 per week. The price of coal is some 100 per cent. higher and iron and steel 66 per cent. to 116 per cent. higher, according to the class of material; yet the net price realised by us to-day for Portland cement in the home trade is only 4.5 per cent. higher than in March, 1914.

Coal Legislation and Prices

By far the most serious influence on costs is the steep increase in the price of coal, which will be felt to a much greater extent in the current year. For every two tons of cement manufactured approximately one ton of coal is required. It was difficult under the control as recently exercised to obtain adequate supplies of the qualities of coal which long experience has shown are best suited to our requirements. This difficulty has now been largely eliminated, for which we are grateful to the Mines Department for the considerable fulfilment of the assurances given by the Secretary for Mines in the House of Commons with reference to this matter.

It was not to be expected that the very low prices ruling for many years would continue indefinitely; indeed, we are not so selfish as to wish for a range of uneconomic prices resulting in miners being underpaid for their hard and dangerous work in winning coal. There is no class of worker better entitled to a really good return for its labour. Further, we do not wish the shareholders in collieries to be deprived of a fair return on their capital provided always the financial structure of the companies in which they are interested and the valuation of their assets are sound.

I believe it would be found that there is a wide gap between the prices in force to-day and such fair prices as could be fixed if the regulations affecting the coal industry were framed on the essential principle that conditions favouring the obtaining of maximum quantities from the mines most economically situated and with the highest efficient production prevailed. The failure to recognise this simple principle when legislation first followed Government intervention and the lack of courage to face the inevitable consequences involved resulted in the taking of a first false step which has been responsible for our floundering on in a maze of unsatisfactory legislation which I do not believe can ever place the coalmining industry on a satisfactory basis from a national point of view.

National Dependence on Cheap Coal

The one bright spot of Government effort has been the passing of overdue legislation to acquire the coal royalties. However, this measure has no immediate influence on the problem of obtaining increased efficiency of production, which is essential to the supply of cheap coal. The sense of loss of opportunity is keener when we realise that we have the good fortune to live in a country small in size but most wonderfully endowed by nature with generous deposits of coal of good quality.

Something is radically wrong that we should have to bear the burden of dear coal. We urgently need to-day the full benefit of every available ton of coal that can be most economically won. Think of the incalculable advantage to an industrial nation of cheap coal to provide low-priced power, heat and light.

How can we expect any of these potential blessings if producers are tethered down to conditions which deny the opportunity for the maximum of expansion of collieries capable of increasing production and thereby diminishing their costs and improving their efficency.

The fruits of efficiency wisely shared mean better wages and working conditions, a better yield on capital invested and fair prices to the consumer. It is impossible for any industry to offer these advantages if its most economic units cannot freely and unfettered enjoy the opportunity for maximum expansion, bringing in its train the certainty of increased efficiency. You are probably thinking, what about the effect caused by the closing of the less economic units and the reduction and displacement of redundant labour? These resultant consequences should be faced. They would certainly become more serious if the demand fell off.

No Justification for Present Prices

There is no justification whatsoever for the present exorbitant prices ruling for coal in this country. Apart from ill-advised legislation the recent policy of the trade has been poor. It is a sad state of affairs when one of our great basic industries is reduced to such a humiliating position as it was 18 months ago that it elected to go cap in hand to its consumers and ask them to waive their legal contracts and make a voluntary contribution to enable it to augment the wages of underpaid miners.

The fact that we conditionally responded to this appeal does not make this ill-conceived effort less revolting to any rational conception of economic or ethical commercial principles. I believe that the consequences of fierce competition, resulting in the survival of the fittest, whatever their immediate effect, would in the end have produced all round healthier results than those forthcoming from the fundamentally unsound schemes now operating.

We must not be disillusioned or misled into thinking that all is well with the coal industry because profits at the moment are much increased by the effect of Government compulsion and by the present improved demand. Who could not make money while the going is good, fortified by the strong supporting arm of the Government? This should not be used to hold up particular interests against the general interests of all citizens of the State. The position of the coal industry is too artificial, and this will become obvious when the inevitable falling off in trade occurs and it is found that the bolstering up of inefficiency has brought its own Nemesis.

Joint Control (with Tunnel) of Alpha Cement

The outstanding event I have to report was the completion of negotiations whereby on January 26 last an offer was made by us to acquire the 1,100,000 issued £1 Ordinary shares of Alpha Cement, Limited, through an exchange on the basis of nine Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers, Limited, Ordinary shares for every 20 Alpha Ordinary shares.

This offer has already been accepted by the holders of over 99 per cent. of the Alpha Ordinary shares, and the appropriate number of Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers' Ordinary shares are in course of being allotted.

An all-important feature of this acquisition is that it is jointly entered into by ourselves and the Tunnel Portland Cement Company, Limited, who take up 26 per cent. of the Alpha Ordinary shares and issue to us in consideration therefor 231,660 Tunnel Company non-voting "B" Ordinary shares of 10s. each, fully paid.

However, the transaction rests on a much broader basis than that of a joint ownership of the equity in the Alpha Company. The Tunnel, the Alpha, and our companies are entering into a working agreement for a term of years which provides for the co-ordination and for the closest co-operation of sales policies.

The purchase was completed on March 24, and Sir Arthur Marshall and Mr. Gowen are being elected directors of this company and the British Portland Cement Manufacturers, Limited. Mr. Gowen will shortly be appointed an *ex-officio* member of the managing directors' committee of both companies.

Present Prosperity and the Outlook

I will now make a few remarks on the general prosperity we are enjoying. It is natural that much interest should be evinced as to whether we are on the crest of the wave, have not reached it, or have passed it. Perhaps the present positon can be best realised if we imagine two waves influencing our prosperity, interlocked but with differential speeds of expansion and contraction of volume.

Let us assume one wave represents the volume of normal activity, not at all or but little affected by the Defence Programme. This wave, I believe, has passed its crest. The other wave, representing the volume of activity more directly due to the Defence Programme, has hardly reached its crest. Because these waves are interlocked it is difficult to measure precisely the volume of each, but the contraction in volume of the first wave is more or less compensated for by the expansion in volume of the second wave.

It needs considerable optimism to assume that when the volume of the wave directly affected by the Defence Programme in turn contracts we shall be so fortunate at that period as to experience an increase in the volume of trade not so affected.

With regard to the prospects for the current year I am definitely hopeful. We have so far experienced a further improved demand resulting in a satisfactory increase of deliveries of Blue Circle Portland cement to date as compared with those made during the corresponding period of last year. This has no doubt been partially helped by the exceptionally favourable weather conditions. The outstanding influence on my forecast is the bright prospect of an increased demand for our products owing to the continued growth of public and other large-scale construction work. These are the sources which create demand for large quantities of Portland cement, and I am assuming they will not be contracted by Government action. For the reasons stated I look forward confidently to submitting to you satisfactory accounts when, all being well, we meet again next year.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.

And from the cottage windows lights began
To glance and wink upon the darkening fields.
—*Martin Chuzzlewit*, Chap. II

SECOND PRIZE

POPE?

She that was ever fair, and never proud,
Had tongue at will, and yet was never loud;
Never lackt gold, and yet went never gay,
Fled from her wish, and yet said 'Now I may';
She that being anger'd, her revenge being nigh,
Bade her wrong stay, and her displeasure fly;
She that in wisdom never was so frail
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail;
She that could think, and ne'er disclose her mind;
See suitors following, and not look behind;
She was a wight, if ever such wight were,
To suckle fools and chronicle small beer.
(*Othello*, Act II, Scene I, lines 149 ff)

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 274.—CHESS AT BISHOP'S CASTLE

Stalemate, the tournament manager, walked into the Secretary's office.

"Listen, Halfpin," he said. "How many of the players we invited have accepted for the principal event?"

Halfpin grinned. "All of them."

"Would you believe it?" said Stalemate. "It's a pretty kettle of fish, isn't it? I'd banked on half of them refusing."

"But does it matter?" said Halfpin.

"Matter? Of course it matters! We can't possibly play that number of games!"

Halfpin's grin broadened. "And what, my dear chap, are you proposing to do about it?"

Stalemate pondered. Then: "I'll tell you what we must do," he said. "Divide the players into four groups—"

"The number," said Halfpin, "doesn't divide by four."

"Doesn't matter. Divide 'em into four groups—which are as nearly equal as possible. Then—let me see . . . We were arranging, weren't we, that each competitor should play one game against each of the others? Well, let each player play *two* games against each of the players in his group. (That's a fairer plan; each gets the white pieces for one game.) Then take the four top players in each group—if more than one tie for a fourth place we'll have to make the selection arbitrarily—and let those sixteen chaps each play one game against each of the others."

"Sounds all right," said Halfpin. "Except that I shouldn't have supposed, off-hand, that that plan would reduce the number of games."

"It does, all the same," said Stalemate. He scribbled on a piece of paper. "It reduces the total number of games by exactly 16 per cent."

How many players have accepted?

PROBLEM 271.—LORD WHIMSEA'S WILL

Lord Whimsea's will was intended to be fogging, and a number of solvers have allowed themselves to be fogged to the extent of submitting two, and in some cases more, solutions.

One, however, is in my opinion clearly preferable to the other.

The alternatives that fall to be considered (after the necessary arithmetic has been done) are:

(1) 11 legatees each receiving £983,080 while 4 receive £280.
(2) 13 „ „ „ £942,760 „ 4 „ £280.

Of these (2) is to be preferred for this reason: that, while each potential legatee may be assumed to know the order of magnitude of Lord Whimsea's fortune (otherwise there is, theoretically, an infinitude of solutions), he does not know the number of legatees. Therefore he is entitled to assume that Whimsea, in fairness to the participants in his fortune, has written down the maximum number of names consistent with its total and with the provisions of the will.

On any other assumption the construction of the terms of the will becomes merely a guessing competition.

The fact that £983,080 is nearer to £1,000,000 than £942,760 does not invalidate the above argument, as the figure of £1,000,000 was not named in the will but was contributed by the *Daily Howl*.

I propose to award 7 points for the solution £942,760 and 5 for £983,080.

PROBLEM 272.—ATHLETICS

A simple problem which, nevertheless, has stumped one or two competitors.

It is readily deducible that the only point-basis consistent with the data is 4 : 3 : 1.

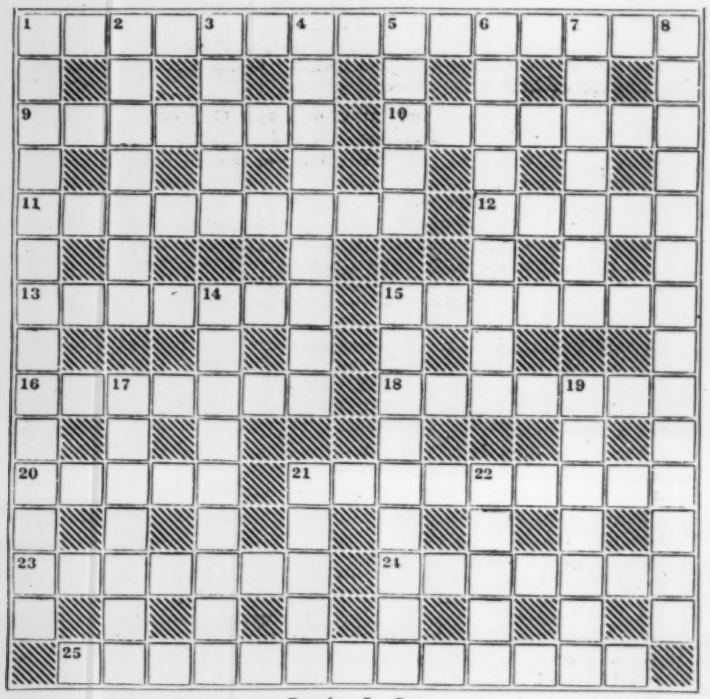
Whence it follows that Caybridge beat Ogford by 61 points to 59.

[U.S.A. Competitors. The Editor regrets that the prizes offered in our Week-end Competitions cannot apply to American competitors.]

CALIBAN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 421

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C.1.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
Mrs. D. Francis, 85 Alexandra Road, St. Austell, Cornwall.

ACROSS

1. Hound *vis-d-vis* monkeys. (15)
9. Has a self-ish way of speaking. (7)
10. Outcome of the one bet I made. (7)
11. Penitent woman worn out with work. (9)
12. Brothers who wrote of 15's domain. (5)
13. These people would be no use as settlers. (7)
15. She was not the subject of Spenser's poem. (7)
16. See 23. (7)
18. Lyrical no doubt in a classical sense. (7)
20. It's best to put the fifth letter in. (5)
21. Canned liquid sprayed on to seedlings? (9)
23. To do this one usually classifies young people, unless they are privately 16. (7)
24. Banter should do the reverse of this. (7)
25. They require a Simian solution. (13)

DOWN

1. Tirers sit at them to get a look in. (14)
2. Stuffy result of giving a sheep drink. (7)
3. May it be friendship? (5)
4. Full of joy at being let in perhaps. (9)
5. A circular note, but not a round robin, for the musician. (5)
6. How one was educated in sickness. (9)
7. This is the view one thinks it is. (7)
8. No doubt their very atmosphere is cleansing. (14)
14. Speedy way to describe m u d d y footmarks. (9)
15. Wearing marriage portion. (9)
17. Roman soldiers shielded themselves in it. (7)
19. Responsible presumably for the Music of the Spheres. (7)
21. Rushlike pipes. (5)
22. Most couples would step round for it. (5)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

G G R O B J E T D A R T
R O O T E D O S I A
E O G R A C E G A M E
A D D L E S D A I M
T T N U D E P A T T E R
C R U F T S R E E L S D
A R A L T S
R U N N I N G I N T O D E B T
E S N O A O
B P L A T E B E A R U P
P U S H E R C O I L P P
R O B A T E T H E R
H E N C O O P S V O E
A A U E T E N N I S
F U L L D R E S S N E S

Company Meeting

THE CHARTERED BANK OF INDIA, AUSTRALIA AND CHINA

EFFECT OF THE CONFLICT IN CHINA

MR. A. D'ANYERS WILLIS' ADDRESS

The 84th ordinary general meeting of the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China was held on 30th March in London.

MR. A. D'ANYERS WILLIS (the chairman) said (in part): The result of the year's trading is a net profit of £491,065, against £496,682 a year ago, a decrease of £5,617. When you remember that last year we have had to provide a substantial sum for national defence contribution, I trust you will not consider the result unsatisfactory. We paid the usual interim dividend last September, and we propose to pay a final dividend at the rate of 14 per cent. per annum, to allocate £35,000 again to the officers' pension fund, and to set aside £40,000 on account of contingencies.

It is, I suppose, only natural that manufacturers hitherto operating under a free trade system should, upon being able to benefit from a protected domestic market, lose some interest in overseas trade, particularly when exporting is so difficult owing to the fiscal and currency restraints now operative in various countries. The change to a modified protective system in this country was designed to alleviate a disability which was working to our detriment, but it was not intended that the limited protection which the domestic trade so acquired could dispense with the necessity of encouraging to the utmost our export trade, on which the health of our industrial structure must depend.

ADVANCE IN PRICES OF PRIMARY PRODUCTS

At the beginning of 1937 there was a feeling that world prosperity was at last returning. In the summer came the Far Eastern crisis to add to an unstable economic situation in America the factor of apprehensiveness regarding the international situation. The British index of prices for primary products, which stood at 163.9 at the end of December, 1936, rose to 181.9 by the end of March, 1937. Since then it has declined abruptly almost without a break till at the end of 1937 it had fallen to 147.4. The world is still hoping for a recovery in American business, and trade activity, on which, as the U.S.A. is the largest individual consumer, the restoration of confidence in the general outlook for primary producers so greatly depends.

In the Far Eastern sphere of the bank's operations the year opened in an atmosphere of cautious optimism. The unification movement had made substantial progress, the new national currency had gained stability, and there were indications that the national finances were being reorganised along lines appropriate to a modern progressive State.

The outbreak of hostilities in the Shanghai district last August affected the Chinese commercial banks adversely and revealed that their assets were far from liquid, in many cases due to their large investments in the Chinese Government Internal Loans, and to advances against property. A situation immediately arose wherein the Chinese Government had to choose between inflation or the imposition of a moratorium upon the liabilities of the Chinese banks to the public. The latter alternative was decided upon, and as a result, the depositors were deprived of the use of their balances with Chinese banks except for small weekly payments.

The information that has reached me from our managers in China inspires the belief that no development has yet taken place which would be likely to impair permanently the profit-earning capacity of the bank as a whole. The material losses sustained by the bank at its branches in China have been slight.

In the economic sphere, India, in common with other primary producers, profited by the general rise in commodity prices which took a definite upward trend in the last quarter of 1936.

Coupled with the rise in value of raw products there was a marked improvement in the international exchange of goods, and India's share in this respect showed marked expansion until the recession set in during the latter part of 1937.

It is impossible to overlook the fact that, in the second half of 1937, business all the world over showed a marked recession, of which we had increasing evidence as the year drew to its close.

The United States of America—with their enormous purchasing power—are a very important factor in respect of any general world recovery, but until the authorities there have solved their industrial and agricultural problems—which are so much bound up with the serious question of unemployment—I fear that a real recovery in international trade is likely to be gravely retarded.

Under normal conditions, the Far East is a very important field of the Bank's operations, but until the present chaotic conditions there show some improvement I think it only right to sound a note of warning that the Bank can scarcely look to being able to work profitably in China and Japan this year.

However, we have ample evidence in the past of the amazing recuperative powers of both China and Japan, and if the present most unfortunate state of affairs comes to a speedy end, I feel confident we should see a very rapid recovery.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.

Company Meeting

ERICSSON TELEPHONES LTD.

COL. SIR H. A. WERNHER'S ADDRESS.

The Annual General Meeting of Ericsson Telephones, Ltd., was held on Wednesday last in London.

Colonel Sir Harold A. Wernher, K.C.V.O. (the chairman), who presided, said in each of his last three speeches, covering the years 1934, 1935 and 1936, he was able to report record order books, and it was gratifying for him again that morning to inform the shareholders that 1937 had provided them with further records for output, net profit and volume of work in hand. Their business with countries within the British Commonwealth had been very satisfactorily maintained, and at the moment they had in progress important contracts for automatic telephone exchanges for the Australian Post Office. Their various departments all benefited from the improved trading conditions which prevailed throughout the year, and each contributed to the satisfactory trading results. It might not be out of place to mention one particular contract, because it was one which was of general interest; he referred to an order received from the Racecourse Betting Control Board involving the renewal of a substantial portion of the electric totalisator at Ascot Racecourse. The contract, which would be completed in time for the Ascot meeting this year, would not only give greater flexibility but would materially increase the rapidity with which bets could be handled, and should thus enable a larger volume of betting to be dealt with.

It was always a pleasure to him to direct their attention to the very efficient telephone service which had been developed in this country by the British Post Office. There used to be a tendency to criticise adversely any enterprise conducted by the State, but there could be no doubt whatever that the Post Office handled a great and difficult business with an efficiency and singleness of purpose which would do credit to any commercial organisation anywhere.

For the first three months of this year their sales were in excess of 1937, and they had a record volume of work in hand; furthermore, in the future they should reap the benefit of the increased capacity of the factory. Under normal trading conditions those facts alone would justify a very optimistic outlook.

The available balance in the profit and loss account was £147,965, and it was proposed to pay a final dividend of 12 per cent. free of tax, making 18 per cent. free of tax for the year, plus a bonus of 7 per cent., also free of tax, and to carry forward £36,708.

The report was unanimously adopted.

Good Design
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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

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SLUMP RENEWED—SILVER AND OIL—RUBBER TROUBLES—THE "GRID"

THE momentary easing of the political tension in Europe brought no respite to the stock markets. Liquidation, mainly on the part of Continental holders—in particular, forced liquidation from ex-Austrians—brought oil, gold and mining shares down to new low levels. The selling of the leading British industrial shares was not severe, but lack of support made havoc of prices. Over the past twelve months our industrial share values have fallen by 30 per cent. To add to the British investor's worries Wall Street has been staging slump after slump. The fact that Congressional opposition to the President is growing and that the Senate Finance Committee has voted for the elimination of the undistributed profits tax and the drastic modification of the capital gains tax has been entirely ignored. The realisation that there will be no spring recovery, that the inventory problem is still acute, that the railroad situation is getting steadily worse and may soon rival the banking situation of 1932, that the utility outlook is not helped by the Supreme Court upholding the registration clause, that the President is still talking down prices and talking up wages and generally behaving like a madman in a signal box, has been too much for the market's nerves. Stocks have been thrown overboard so lustily that the Dow Jones industrial index has fallen by 18½ points in ten days. Consider the slump in the leaders:

	High 1937.	1938. Jan. 11.	March 29.
Industrials.			
American Tel. & Tel.	187	149	112½
Bethlehem Steel	105½	65⅞	43¼
Chrysler	135¼	59⅞	38⅛
General Electric	64⅞	44¼	29
General Motors	70½	37⅜	27¾
Sears Roebuck	98¼	63½	47½
U.S. Steel	126½	60¾	40¾
Railroads.			
Atchison	93½	40½	23½
Southern Pacific	63⅜	21⅜	9½

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It is impossible to say that Wall Street has panicked without reason, because earnings in many cases—for example, the steels—have vanished completely, so that prices are merely supported by sentiment. Abolish the sentiment and there is no reason why U.S. Steel should not stand at 20 instead of 40. Business opinion is at last becoming aware that President Roosevelt either cannot understand the business situation or would not even if he could. It can see no hope except in a Presidential defeat in November.

* * *

Despite Mr. Morgenthau's repeated assurances that Mexico's "anti-Gringo" oil campaign would lead to no change in the silver policy of the United States, Uncle Sam has apparently been dissuaded by Standard Oil from tamely offering the other cheek. Last week-end the Treasury at Washington announced that after the end of March it would discontinue its monthly purchases of 5 million ounces of Mexican silver. The decision led to a sharp fall in the world price of the metal and considerable qualms of capitalist conscience in the London bullion market. On the assumption that the U.S. decision was retaliatory in purpose—a sort of economic sanction against anti-oil aggression—the City argued that, since British interests were involved in Mexican oil, solidarity with Washington should be displayed by London. On this reasoning, London ought to place an embargo on purchases of Mexican silver—a step which Mexico might circumvent by having its silver refined on the Continent, but whose intentions would be well received in Washington. The whole problem, however, has been complicated by the U.S. Treasury's decision to reduce its buying price for silver—to 44 cents per ounce on Monday, and 43 cents on Tuesday. This has led to the belief in some quarters that President Roosevelt is utilising the Mexican oil quarrel as an excuse to complete the retreat from the 1935 silver buying programme. In any event, fears that the U.S. Treasury may continue, by successive reductions of its buying price, the merry game of chasing downwards a slumping world silver price have effectively paralysed the activities of arbitrageurs whatever might be their feelings regarding capitalist solidarity with Washington. Meanwhile the Mexican peso is falling steadily against the U.S. dollar. If its depreciation proceeded far enough, the expropriated oil companies might be in a position to pay wage rates, in pesos, acceptable to the Mexican Government—assuming, that is, that rather than raise funds for compensation President Cardenas decided to offer the companies fresh leases.

* * *

Silver is not the only commodity in distress. As a result of further curtailment of American consumption, world stocks of rubber have risen during the current quarter from roughly 520,000 to 560,000 tons—a figure definitely unwieldy—and the 60 per cent. export quota fixed by the International Rubber Regulation Committee for April–June offers no prospect of any appreciable diminution of stocks during the coming three months. With rubber quoted on Monday at 6½*d.* per lb., it was expected that the Committee, even if it were too late to revise the April-June quota, would decide at its Tuesday meeting to lower the third quarter export quota to something like 50 per cent. To the market's dismay, the Committee decided to postpone consideration of the July-October quota until May 31st—either because it takes an optimistic view of future consumption, or because its members could not agree on policy. The immediate consequence was a further fall in the price of rubber to 5 $\frac{5}{16}$*d.*

* * *

The annual report of the Central Electricity Board is an impressive record of technological progress which amply justifies the conception of the "Grid" system. Since inter-connection began it has been possible to effect a striking reduction in the reserve capacity required to be maintained. The saving to the supply industry under this head is estimated by the Board to have amounted already to £17 millions—over half the capital cost of the "Grid." Furthermore, concentration of output on the more efficient generating plants has reduced by 17 per cent. since 1932 the average fuel consumption per unit of electricity generated—a saving which more than counterbalances the rise in costs per ton of fuel. Finally, with less than half of its ten-year financial schedule completed, the Board is able out of net revenue to cover the whole of the interest and nearly all the amortisation required on its capital. From every point of view the "Grid" is a success. The tragedy is that the benefits are largely withheld from the consumer as a result of the unreformed anarchy of waste, inefficiency and profiteering in distribution by franchised undertakers.

Company Meeting

HALIFAX BUILDING SOCIETY

SIR ENOCH HILL'S ADDRESS

The 85th Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at Halifax on Monday last. Sir Enoch Hill, J.P., F.C.I.S., President, said (in part): The total amount advanced upon new mortgages during the year was £20,943,616 6*s*. 1*d*. The new borrowers enrolled number 33,795. There has been an increase of £6,080,910 16*s*. 0*d*. in the amount due upon mortgage, and the total amount outstanding on mortgage securities is now £98,276,899 12*s*. 0*d*., the average amount owing per mortgage being only £410. The Society's Mortgage Accounts continue to be eminently satisfactory. The liquid funds now amount to £23,634,393 2*s*. 4*d*., equal to 19.27 per cent. upon the total assets of the Society. The Investment Share and Deposit Funds have increased during the year by £7,783,560 7*s*. 9*d*. to a total of £117,089,819 2*s*. 4*d*.

An increase of £8,298,431 4*s*. 7*d*. has been made in the total assets which now stand at £122,626,007 10*s*. 7*d*. This is a very remarkable growth, in face of the fact that the Investment Departments of the Society have been very considerably restricted. New accounts opened during the year number 94,912 and the total number of Shareholders' and Depositors' Accounts open at the end of the period was 712,414, an increase of 29,799 Accounts.

PROFIT AND APPROPRIATIONS

The balance of profit for the year, after payment of all expenses and full provision for Income Tax, National Defence Contribution, and all interest due to Depositors to the date of the Account and for depreciation of office properties, amounted to £3,034,531 13*s*. 2*d*., to which has to be added the balance brought forward from last year, namely, £67,342 7*s*. 10*d*., making a total of £3,101,874 1*s*. 0*d*., out of which the following appropriations have been made: Interest to Shareholders, £2,473,217 10*s*. 3*d*.; Staff Superannuation Fund, £50,000 0*s*. 0*d*.; General Reserve Fund, £400,000 0*s*. 0*d*.; totalling £2,923,217 10*s*. 3*d*.; and leaving a balance of £178,656 10*s*. 9*d*., from which the Directors have allocated a bonus of 10*s*. per cent. to the Paid-up Shareholders, Class 1, and a bonus of 20*s*. per cent. to the Monthly Investing Shareholders, amounting together to £112,488 16*s*. 8*d*., leaving a balance to be carried forward to next year of £66,167 14*s*. 1*d*. The above allocation is on the same basis as that of the preceding year and will make a total yield for the past year to the Paid-up Shareholders, Class 1, of £3 15*s*. 0*d*. per cent. and to the Subscription Shareholders of £4 5*s*. 0*d*. per cent., the Income Tax on both interest and bonus being borne by the Society.

The total Reserve Funds and Undivided Profit now amount to £5,066,167 14*s*. 1*d*. Losses on the realisation of properties falling into the possession of the Society, as usual, have been borne out of the profits of the year, and they represented last year an almost negligible proportion of the mortgage interest earned, namely, less than 3*d*. in the £.

HOUSE PURCHASE ON CONVENIENT TERMS

Out of the total of 239,147 mortgages, 191,632 are in respect of mortgages where the balance does not exceed £500, a fact representative of the aim of the Directors at all times to give every possible preference and encouragement to applications for advances for the purchase of small houses on convenient terms. Every known facility within the bounds of prudence is offered by the Society, and borrowers present and prospective are assured of helpful consideration in their applications.

THE NEW HOUSING BILL

If the new Housing Bill, now before Parliament, becomes law, Local Authorities will be faced with the task of building some 430,000 houses or residential flats within the next five or six years, to provide housing accommodation for those persons who are dispossessed through either slum clearance or overcrowding conditions. This duty should so fully engage the attention of our Local Authorities that they may well leave to private enterprise and the building industry the provision of small houses suitable for the requirements of the working classes or for letting at low rentals under the Housing Acts 1933/36, or for purchase and personal occupation by the owner, with the direct assistance of Building Societies. I see no need whatever why Local Authorities or the Government should enter upon large schemes for building houses and letting them at an uneconomic rent to all and sundry, creating a great burden upon the ratepayer and the taxpayer. I regard it as nothing less than a tragedy that individuals who are well able to provide their own housing accommodation should be made a burden at the expense of others. There would be a great gain by the mobilisation of personal resources rather than by making a nation of tenants of State-owned houses. I conclude with an expression of profound thankfulness that in a year in which crisis has followed crisis in International political affairs, the people of Great Britain, in times of comparative prosperity, have been able to continue in the quiet and happy enjoyment of the homes which so many of them possess through their own initiative, and which have been provided largely by Building Societies.

The report and accounts were adopted.

Company Meeting

NATIONAL BANK OF INDIA

MR. R. LANGFORD JAMES'S ADDRESS

The ordinary general meeting of the National Bank of India Ltd. was held in London, E.C., on March 28th, Mr. R. Langford James (the chairman) presiding, said (in part): On the liabilities side of the balance-sheet current, fixed deposit and other accounts amount to £30,466,945, which is an increase of £439,264 over the previous year. Acceptances on behalf of customers are up by £141,500, while, on the other side, cash, bullion on hand and in transit appears as £5,303,152, against £5,411,233. British and Indian Government Securities combined amount to £15,304,062, which is some £750,000 higher than in the previous balance-sheet. Bills of Exchange at £4,525,842 show a reduction of £283,592 and discounts, loans receivable, etc., at £10,073,727 a small increase of £68,881.

INCREASED NET PROFITS

The net profits for the year amount to £465,861 16*s*. 8*d*., which is an increase of £9,575 10*s*. 5*d*. over the previous year and with the sum of £243,954 18*s*. 10*d*. brought forward the amount available is £709,816 15*s*. 6*d*. An interim dividend at the rate of 18 per cent. per annum, less income-tax, was declared in September last and the directors now recommend the payment of a final dividend at the same rate. These together will absorb £360,000, and we propose to add £50,000 to staff pensions funds and to place £50,000 towards reduction of premises account, carrying forward to next account £249,816 15*s*. 6*d*.

In viewing the profits it is necessary to bear in mind our large holdings of Government securities, to which I have just referred, the income from which will tend to decrease as the securities which bear high rates of interest reach maturity date, when it seems almost inevitable that the rate on the loans issued to replace them will be on a lower basis.

There has not been any notable change in money conditions in India. The Bank rate in that country remained at 3 per cent. throughout the year. This rate has been effective since November 28th, 1935, and for close upon three years prior to that date the rate remained at 3½ per cent. We have thus had five consecutive years of a low Bank rate in India.

POSITION IN INDIA

India ended the year with a favourable trade balance of about Rs.56 crores, which shows a fall of Rs.24.37 crores when compared with the previous year. The value of gold exported during the year amounted to £13,708,000, against £24,870,000 in 1936. Trade, generally speaking, in that country has not been unsatisfactory.

I referred last year to the fact that nationalisation is now as attractive in India as it is in other countries, and it is only to be expected that a growing proportion of the internal trade of India will be financed by the indigenous banks, who, with an increased demand for banking facilities, will extend their branches and be well placed to deal with it.

The cotton mills in the West of India have experienced better trading conditions and profitable working, though on a modest scale, has been more the order of the day than the losses to which their shareholders have unfortunately become so accustomed of late years. A committee appointed by the Bombay Government to inquire into the question of the wages of workers in the cotton mills in that Province has recently recommended increases which will amount to some 12–14 per cent. of the wages bill. This can scarcely be a welcome imposition to an industry struggling to emerge from a long period of depression.

The jute mill industry in Bengal is in no better case than it was when we met last year. The trouble is over-production. For many years the mills who are members of the Indian Jute Mills Association maintained the prices of their products at an attractive level by working short time. Almost inevitably this led to the erection of additional mills, some of which have found it profitable to remain outside the association, thereby not binding themselves to its working hours. The effect of competition by these "outside" mills has been to raise stocks to a high level, and profits have dwindled almost to vanishing point.

Tea companies, under the protection of the international scheme for the regulation of exports, continue to enjoy modest prosperity. As regards rubber, the optimism in the early part of the year was reflected in the price which reached 1*s*. 1½*d*. at the end of March, but by the end of December had receded to 6 15-16*d*. Sugar prices in India recorded a further substantial decline last year, and manufacturers have been experiencing anything but a happy time. Broadly speaking, it appears to be acknowledged that, so far as internal consumption is concerned, production in India has reached saturation point. It is perhaps permissible to question the wisdom of the undertaking, recently given by the Government of India, that export of sugar from that country will be prohibited during this and the succeeding four years.

In Burma trading conditions during 1937 showed further improvement. Rice exports at 3,200,000 tons were slightly in excess of the previous year's figures, and paddy prices ruled about 10 p.c. higher. There was a marked increase in exports to Europe, these totalling 714,000 tons, as against 535,000 tons in 1936. Shipments to India were correspondingly smaller, due to better crop conditions in that country, while exports to other markets were well maintained.

The adoption of the report and accounts was carried unanimously.